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**HAROLD BENJAMIN, *Consulting Editor***

**PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

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# *Public Relations in Education*

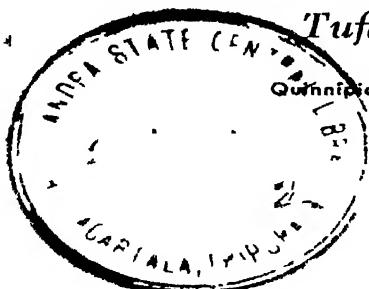
A TEXTBOOK FOR TEACHERS

*Clifford Lee Brownell, Ph.D.*

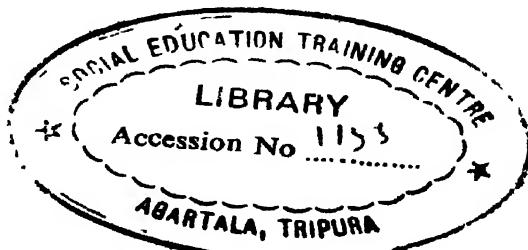
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**PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

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## *Preface*

Most educational administrators and teachers recognize the need for sound public relations. The time has passed when education might have expected enduring community support without acquainting people with the purposes, programs, accomplishments, and needs of the schools. Only through mutual confidence and respect between those who finance the schools and those who conduct them may substantial progress be made in the improvement of American education.

This book attempts to provide a basic and systematic plan for use by instructional and administrative staffs in the organization and maintenance of effective public relations. It contains the elements upon which a program of public relations may be established by persons with limited experience in this field, and it gives detailed explanations of more intricate techniques of value to those who have completed the initial stages of influencing people by the appropriate dissemination of accurate and timely information. It emphasizes the program itself as the most significant feature in public relations and stresses the positive influence of a competent and loyal staff. Only with these foundations of program and staff may any public-relations plan be expected to attain marked success.

Perhaps the main feature of this book relates to its practical nature. It does not attempt to present a long and detailed treatment of the background of public relations. Instead, the authors have preferred the direct approach that explains the persuasive methods used by successful

educators and commercial organizations to influence a desired audience. The book aims at preciseness and specificity.

The authors hope they have succeeded in organizing the text in a fashion both logical and convenient for the reader. The first six chapters provide necessary background for the reader by pointing out the nature of American schools today, by characterizing the kinds of people found in the average community, by establishing the place and respectability of good public relations, by explaining why public relations is necessary, by describing the various publics and how they may be reached, and by defining the role of publicity with emphasis on news of human-interest value. The next seven chapters discuss the essential techniques of dealing successfully with persons connected with newspapers, radio, and television; explain how and when to use pictures; describe the art of public speaking; illustrate desirable and undesirable features of demonstrations and exhibitions; and emphasize the importance of students and parents as contributors to public relations. The final chapter summarizes the significant items in the text, presents techniques for evaluating programs of public relations, and concludes with the firm statement that good education and adequate public relations go hand in hand.

The authors desire to express sincere appreciation for numerous suggestions and information obtained from those who, in correspondence and interview, furnished much data which proved useful in the writing of the text. They wish to give thanks also to colleagues and friends for their kindly assistance. They will welcome comments and criticisms from readers. Only in this way can published materials be improved in such a comparatively new field as public relations in education.

Clifford Lee Brownell  
Leo Gans  
Tufie Z. Maroon

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One encouraging evidence of progress in education today is that school administrators, teachers, and members of the press have awakened to the importance of interpreting the schools to the public. Some people are leading sincere efforts to gain know-how in this field. Newspapers in increasing numbers are giving more space to news of education, and are reporting it more ably.

Upon the schools rests much of democracy's future. Even the best of schools cannot go far without an understanding citizenry.<sup>1</sup>

## *These Are Your Schools*

ONE

### **IT HAPPENED IN FAIRVILLE**

Elm Street School is the center of many activities in Fairville, particularly in summer when the playgrounds are in use. Many adults who live near the school attended its kindergarten and six grades and are, in their own opinion, well-informed on educational practices. An argument can be started among Fairville residents by suggesting that Bern Street School, the other elementary school in the mill section of Fairville, is in any way superior to Elm Street School. Needless to say, Bern Street School has its own enthusiastic partisans. The rivalry is even more noticeable when it comes to the other two elementary schools up in the hill section of Fairville, Oaklawn and Maple Avenue schools. To any resident of the mill district, they might well be part of another school system.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

Elm Street, Bern Street, Oaklawn, and Maple Avenue are the four elementary schools which send pupils to the one junior-senior high school, Lincoln Memorial School. Because of its central location, Lincoln Memorial School is well-known to Fairville residents, most of whom were students there for varying periods of time.

Somehow or other, pupils feel stronger loyalties to the elementary schools they attended than to their junior-senior high school. Of course, many resident of Fairville did not graduate from Lincoln Memorial School. The number of adults who left school before completing the program is much larger in the mill section than in the hill section. Avowed reasons for leaving school include comments on the difficulty and impracticality of the educational program offered, together with the desirability and necessity of earning money. Among residents of the hill section, Lincoln Memorial School is highly regarded because of its excellent reputation in securing admission to colleges for its graduates.

The superintendent of schools in Fairville is Thomas S., who has lived in Fairville for many years. Prior to his appointment as superintendent of schools he served as the junior-senior high-school principal. Reasonably, the management of schools and the securing of tax monies demand a great deal of his time and effort.

He says with some misgivings,<sup>2</sup> "We've tried to make improvements in the schools here, consistently and conservatively. Several times I've proposed to the school board that we should offer vocational training to the boys and girls who want and need it, particularly those in the mill section. Such efforts haven't been very successful. I've tried at times

<sup>2</sup> All interview quotations are abridged from actual samplings in a given community.

to stir up some parental interest in expanding our program offerings, but there isn't much spark to build on—many parents seem to believe that it would be nice to have more general education, but they are unwilling to get behind it. Our school staff does a good job, all things considered. We haven't held staff meetings as often as we should, and I plan to bring the five schools together more often.

"No," he admits, "there's no persistent effort made to explain what we're trying to do, although every parent-teacher or parent-principal conference includes some attention to the job of the school, I think. I've included explanations of what the schools in Fairville attempt to do in each yearly report, but I often wonder how much those reports are read. Yes, I think the people in Fairville would support, both financially and otherwise, a good program of education once they understood it. As it is, the people who live here have grown up with the schools, and the concept is pretty firmly established that the schools are all right. I don't think they'd want any sweeping changes made, or even minor changes that would cost considerable money; but they'd go along with reasonable improvements. We've had individual teachers who've done some curriculum-improvement work, but we've not had any concerted action on it. There again, we wouldn't want to make drastic changes."

Ben J., is the father of two children who attend Elm Street School. He is employed as a lathe operator in the local plant, owns his own home (subject to mortgage), and is an industrious, clean-cut family man. As Ben sees it, "The school tries to keep 'em straightened out and get 'em ready for Lincoln. It does a pretty good job of keeping children out of trouble, and the kids sure like the playground."

Perry M. owns a thriving store in the mill section. His

oldest boy is in Lincoln Memorial School; his two younger children attend the Bern Street School. Perry's feelings about the schools are mixed: "I suppose they do the best they can with kids who don't have too much at home. But my youngest doesn't read the way she should, and she's in third grade. The boy in high school is all right, except in French and algebra; don't know why he has to take that stuff when he's not going to college, but they told him he had to. He works here after school—going into the store with me when he finishes. Guess we'll have to send him to business school or something.

"No, I don't think any teacher has ever told me or my wife how they pick subjects at Lincoln. Of course, I haven't gone to visit the way I should. Sure, they ought to give children as much training in reading and the rest of the subjects as they can, but they ought to teach them something about earning a living."

Mrs. Miles T. is an active member of the Maple Avenue Parent-Teacher Association. She is generally regarded as a good homemaker and mother. Her two young children attend Maple Avenue School. Her reactions to the job of the schools reflect both satisfaction and concern:

"I know most of the teachers at the school, and they do a good job. I do wish, though, that they'd drill more in reading and in spelling. My two children can do without some of the art and recreation work—they get enough of that after school and week ends. Some of the children should be sent to Bern or Elm Street School, where they could learn at their own speeds; teachers have told me that a few pupils at Maple Avenue hold the rest back. Yes, my children read pretty well. Spelling is neglected, though. Why, my husband took out one of his old fourth-grade

spellers, and Bernice hadn't even seen some of the words before, let alone spelled them.

"No, I don't think I've ever seen any statement of all the things the school tries to do, but I've got a pretty good idea from listening to my two children."

Harry L. owns the town's only lumberyard. Because of his many community activities and unselfish efforts in Fairville's behalf, he is regarded as a civic leader. His two children attend Oaklawn School, and withal, Harry expresses satisfaction with the school and the progress of his children.

"They do a pretty good job there. The kids are happy, they're under control, and they seem to be learning what they should. Sometimes I wish they'd get closer to home in some of the subjects because we want our youngsters to grow up and keep on living in Fairville. The teachers and principal are friendly people. They've tried to get us to see that we have to spend more money if we want better schooling, but a lot of the people in this town don't see it that way. I figure that a dollar or two more a thousand would yield pretty good returns. You have to give people something definite to think about though, if you want them to pay more money."

The statement of Jeremiah T. includes some of the more bitter criticism of Fairville's schools. A man without children, owner of a large amount of real estate which is leased to homeowners and businessmen, Mr. T. can well be characterized as a man with his eye on the tax dollar.

"My big complaint about these schools is that they cost too much money—money they get by taxing real estate. Why, do you know that the tax rate in this town has gone up every single year since 1941? There are too many boys and girls in high school who just kill time—they ought to be

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out working the way I did. No, I don't know what kind of teachers you'd get for less money, but I do know that if we put some of these kids to work, we wouldn't need so many teachers. They give the children too many extras—they don't need art, or music or health or shop—we never had that stuff when I went to school. Just give them the good foundation subjects and leave the frills alone. Sure, if I had children of my own, I'd want to give them a good education, but I can afford to pay for it; most of the kids in the mill section shouldn't have too much schooling anyway.

"No, why should I find out what the schools in Fairville are trying to do for the children. I know what its costs to run the schools, and it's too much!"

Jake R. is an employee in the lumberyard owned by Harry L. Jake attended Lincoln Memorial School, graduated, and now has a son and daughter who are students there. He says, "It's a good school and I keep telling my two that you have to finish high school if you want a chance at anything else. The school trains 'em, and if they last three years, they get a diploma. Sure, we know what they're trying to do—they give them good solid subjects, and if they should want to go to college, they can get in. My two will have to earn their own way, so I guess there's not much chance of college."

Mrs. Mary M. is librarian in Fairville's public library. Her daughter is a student at Lincoln Memorial School and works after school in the library. Mrs. M. has had quite a struggle to support herself and her daughter since the death of her husband. Mrs. M's reactions to the curriculum of the public schools reflect not only her experiences with her daughter but her observations of youngsters of school age who use the public library:

"In the academic areas, Lincoln Memorial School does a

good job. My daughter Eleanor does very well in the basic subjects, and my hope is that she can get some kind of scholarship to go on to a library-training school. I do wish that there were more opportunities in homemaking or commercial subjects so that Eleanor would be able to take better care of herself; but if they take the college-preparatory subjects, they don't have time to take anything else. I've got a pretty good idea what the schools try to do, but I wish they said things in different language. Too many times I feel that I should have to take a course in educational terminology to understand what they really mean."

Some of the teachers and administrators of Fairville's schools give succinct answers to queries about the objectives of the public schools. A teacher in the Bern Street School says with firm conviction, "Get them ready for the next grade is my major aim. That means drill in the skill subjects and not too much time on anything else. The achievement tests given in May have to measure up or I hear about it!"

The principal of Maple Avenue School has given a great deal of thought to the job of the elementary schools in general and to Maple Avenue School in particular. As he sees it, "We ought to do a good job in reading, writing, and arithmetic but we ought to do a great many other things, too. We've not done nearly enough work in speech or in learning to listen with discrimination. And I know we have many youngsters who ought to have more opportunities to do construction and manipulative work. While I'm not alibiing, parents are happier if we keep our school more formal, do more drill work. Surely they like to see their children perform in a play or cantata, but parents don't want the frills or play activities to take up too much time."

Mr. T., principal of Lincoln Memorial School, is well

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aware of the program limitations of the junior-senior high school but expresses uncertainty as to better techniques that might bring about change. He says, "A lot of these youngsters leave here because we're not giving them what they need; we ought to have more prevocational training and we ought to establish a different base for our required subjects for about half the students in the school. So long as we get boys and girls into college, the people who really run Fairville are satisfied. Some day we're going to have to face the fact that most of the boys and girls who leave school early stay on in Fairville and become voting citizens. Right now I'd like to put in some form of general-education base, with the opportunity for at least general vocational training, but I don't think the time is right for that."

"No, we don't make many attempts to help parents understand what we're trying to do. There again, the parents of the youngsters who go on to college know pretty well what program we offer, and their only concern is that youngsters meet entrance requirements. Parents of the other youngsters and those of the 'early school leavers' don't care very much what we offer. Sure, they'd like to have their children finish high school, but by and large the opportunity to have another wage earner in the family has a great deal of bearing on their attitude."

Seth B. is chairman of the school board, a real-estate man, a director of the bank, and the father of two children who attend the Fairville schools. He has served as a member of the school board for eight years and speaks as a conscientious student of school affairs.

"We're getting to the point where we'll have to change our senior high school; some of the graduates can't find jobs, and some of those who didn't graduate have become typical floaters. For years the people here have been pretty well

satisfied—you get to the point where things are taken for granted, and that's hard to cope with when you want to increase a school budget to buy shop equipment and hire a teacher. Too many people feel that the schools are good enough as they are, so why pay more money to change them? Another factor to consider here is that the mill and hill sections pay the bulk of the real-estate taxes and outside of state aid that's where most of the money comes from to run the schools. Board members are elected as individuals—no party lines in Fairville, and that's a good thing, don't you think? Most adults here remember the schools and the teachers as they were, so we'd have a hard time reshaping public opinion toward different educational objectives. I don't think it's a hopeless job but it will take a lot of time and some expert leadership. Surely, people have to understand the job of the schools before they'll increase their support, no matter what kind of support. Our board has to move slowly, but there are many times when we'd like to move faster."

Thus the citizens of Fairville express their opinions of the schools.

#### THE NEED

No questionnaire or cross-section technique, regardless of its accuracy, can possibly reflect all the publics' reactions to the schools. The reconstructed interviews presented above are typical, to some degree at least, of representative points of view—reactions which highlight the urgent need for defining, in layman's language, a clear-cut statement of policy for a school system. Throughout the responses there is emphasis on the dominant and understandable logic that personal experience with the public schools, either as an adult or through the eyes of a child, determines one's at-

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

titude toward education. Recurring too is the attempt of the residents of Fairville to state in their own terms what the schools appear to regard as their educational purposes. Some willingness to be analytic is reflected in their statements; some desire to improve the school system which certain residents believe has become static is evidenced; but above all else, there is demonstrated the urgent need for public understanding of what all the schools in Fairville attempt to do.

There is need for a statement of educational objectives in every city or town, with the exception of those few communities where such objectives have already been achieved. Without guiding administrative policies and educational objectives which serve as a basis of understanding within the community and as a guide to action within the schools, there can be no consistent and effective program of public relations.

### **WHO DETERMINES POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES?**

The school administrations in some cities have answered this question by attempting to bring in all the people concerned, only to realize that not everyone in a community is immediately concerned with the operation of the schools. Other cities have adapted generally accepted and stated objectives and have, through repetition and explanation, superimposed these objectives upon the school system. Still other communities have attempted to mobilize thinking and planning toward desirable educational goals.

In realistic terms, any program of public relations rests upon a genuine concern for the education of each child, a concern which the professional personnel of a school system translate into a worthwhile and human school pro-

gram. But no plan or program achieves consistency or progress without some basis of agreement on the objectives of fundamental importance for each child. Formulation of worthwhile goals for the schools in any community thus becomes a necessary foundation upon which to build effective public relations. While there is no one best method of securing general agreements for formulating objectives for a school or school system, there are some techniques which deserve consideration. These techniques include the following:

1. Individual states have delegated to local school boards and school committees the jurisdiction over the programs in the public schools of each town, county, or city, subject to certain statutory provisions. Since this is the case, the local school board, preferably upon recommendation of the superintendent, must sponsor attempts to formulate policies which govern the school system
2. The administrative and teaching staffs, as a cooperative endeavor, can join forces to state in writing the present and expected goals for public schools. From grade-, subject-, and organizational-level statements of the necessary skills, understandings, attitudes, and information comes the beginning framework of educational policies and objectives on which there is some agreement.
3. Submitted statements from teachers and administrators can be pooled under a convenient but simple form of organization. This combined statement should then be returned to all teachers and administrators for comment, discussion, and suggestions for improvement.
4. A summary draft of the policies and objectives for the school system, incorporating suggested improvements,

should be drawn up by a small group of administrators and teachers.

5. Copies of the summary draft should be made available to the press; to each member of the schools' personnel; to parent-teacher associations, community groups, and teachers' organizations; and to interested members of the community who may not be affiliated with organized clubs or associations. Each of these groups and individuals should be told that suggestions and criticisms are welcome. Members of the educational staff should be willing to accept any invitations to discuss the stated objectives of the school with any interested group.
6. Revisions of the stated policies and objectives on the basis of suggestions from teachers, community groups, or others should be considered and handled as teacher-administrator functions. The school board may be requested to adopt these stated policies and objectives, incorporating for school-board action those factors which have failed of resolution.
7. Continuous evaluation and application of stated objectives and policies in all areas of the schools should be made by teachers and administrators.

Authoritative statements on worthwhile policies and objectives for public schools, secured from national organizations of various types, should be referred to at all stages of local deliberations. In view of the fact that determination of school objectives and policies is traditionally a local function, no national or state objective can be adopted *in toto*. Each community has both the legal right and the moral obligation to express its educational aims in terms which, while consistent with generally accepted patterns, reflect local needs and aspirations.

**A SUGGESTED PATTERN**

Many communities have formulated statements of objectives and policies for their public schools, using various techniques to reach agreements and to draw conclusions. The following abridged statement of objectives illustrates the organizational pattern used and the tentative conclusions reached by teachers and administrators in one community; it is entitled *The Springfield Public Schools Subscribe to the Following Goals.*<sup>1</sup>

**1. Personal goals.**

- A. *To help each individual grow and develop in the best possible ways.*
  - 1. To acquire such skills, understandings, interests, and habits as will enable him to read, write, speak, listen, and otherwise use the symbols of communication with as great facility as possible.
  - 2. To help him know his health and recreational needs, and how to care for them effectively.
  - 3. To help him acquire the special knowledges, skills, and habits he needs to become a valued and intelligent producer and consumer of goods and services.
  - 4. To help him recognize and appreciate beauty in nature, art, music, writing, and construction.
  - 5. To develop an appreciation of the dignity of work.
  - 6. To give him understanding of, and practice in, desirable human relationships.
  - 7. To help him think clearly and act courageously in achieving those deep spiritual and emotional values basic to all fruitful living.
- B. *To help each individual cultivate wholesome social relationships.*

<sup>1</sup> Used by permission of Dr William Sanders, superintendent of schools, Springfield, Mass.

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A happy, well-adjusted life for the individual is realized only when he sets a high value upon human relationships; lives, works, and plays with others in sincere enjoyment; appreciates the significance of the family for the individual and society; and participates actively and effectively in his own family life.

C. *To help each individual become a contributing member of the local, state, national, and world communities through:*

1. Learning to understand social conditions, customs, and trends.
2. Sharing the responsibility for recognizing and changing unsatisfactory conditions.
3. Developing attitudes of critical judgment and respect for the opinions of other persons.
4. Observing laws respecting persons and property.
5. Accepting civic duties as a part of his loyalty to democratic ideals and principles of action.
6. Understanding the importance of conserving natural and human resources.
7. Realizing the importance of utilizing the contributions of science for the well-being of mankind.
8. Understanding the social values of work.
9. Learning to be a successful producer in his chosen vocation.
10. Planning the economics of his own life so that he may become an informed and skillful buyer of goods and services.

### II. *The School Environment and Program.*

The school is the agency established by society for the fundamental purpose of providing appropriate educational experiences for every individual capable of benefiting from it.

Achievement of the social purposes of education depends upon the extent to which the school functions as a democracy.

Each teacher should be an expert guide for individuals and a skillful leader of group life. The school environment, because of its effect upon the processes of living and learning, should be vital, stimulating, and pleasant.

An adequate school program is based upon an understanding of human needs and how people learn to meet these needs. Knowledge of the growth processes through which the individual matures physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally is the basis for planning the Springfield Educational Program.

Two major factors control the development of our educational program:

1. The ability of the professional staff in planning and executing the program.
2. The understanding and willingness of the community to finance all phases of the program including proper facilities, equipment, and remuneration for professional workers.

### III. *Evaluation.*

A continuing evaluation of the Springfield program in the light of accepted aims is essential to consistent growth and effectiveness. The program should be constantly studied and interpreted to determine its effectiveness in order that plans for improvement can be formulated and put into practice. Important considerations in evaluation are:

#### A. *To help the student:*

1. Estimate his own progress in skills, abilities, informational growth, and in human relationships.
2. Understand the possibilities of continued growth in general areas of learning and in his own specific areas of abilities.
3. Appreciate his growing responsibility as a citizen of our community.

#### B. *To help the parents and the community:*

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

1. Understand and participate in the educational program.
2. Develop a willingness to help in the improvement of the total school program.
3. Weigh the worth of materials and services in terms of established educational values.
4. Willingly provide the schools with adequate support through an appreciation of the worth of educational offerings.

C. *To help the professional staff:*

1. Initiate, develop, and execute educational improvements which will further the educational opportunities of each child and all children.
2. Use skillfully objective and subjective means of evaluating skills, information, abilities, and social growth.
3. Determine whether the business management of the school system is returning honest value for each taxpayer's dollar, and whether the business management is furthering desirable and adequate education.
4. Develop careful appraisals of the effectiveness of the schools in guiding the individual's development as a constructive community citizen.

The preceding statement illustrates the major policies and objectives commonly recognized by most communities and by most administrators and teachers. Although complete agreement as to practice, interpretation, and procedure may not be gained in any limited period of time, the values to be derived from cooperative endeavor in arriving at a statement of philosophy or objectives cannot be overestimated. Certainly some agreements, not only in the interests of public relations but also in the interests of educational progress, must serve to weld a staff into a more cohesive working group. Only through agreement as to basic policies and objectives can a public-relations program achieve the

necessary consistency and continued cooperation of school personnel.

**SUMMARY**

There are many publics in each community and many publics related to each school.

*Understanding of the purposes and practices of public schools by lay members of the community tends to differ in many important respects from the understanding of school personnel.*

Citizens of a typical community reflect personal attitudes toward the schools—attitudes composed of experience, hearsay, and limited information.

A certain percentage of the residents of any community appraise public education in terms of cost only, with little understanding of the returns to the community of money wisely invested in education.

Many citizens have no clear-cut information about the schools which would allow them to evaluate education with intelligent understanding.

There is an urgent need for consolidating the policies and objectives of each school and of each school system into a working guide for use by school personnel and by interested groups in the community.

**QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Select three or four adults in your community well-known to you. Secure from them their opinions as to what the schools attempt to achieve.
2. Prepare a statement which you might use to secure better understanding of two phases of school costs by members of the parent-teachers association, explaining:
  - a. What each tax dollar buys in education.

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- b. When a tax dollar should go to the schools rather than to roads, public improvements, or other civic enterprises.
3. Check with three or more teachers to find out what they regard as the fundamental objectives of their classroom teaching, their community-school relations, and public education in general. Do their replies support or oppose the view that these teachers follow a consistent pattern of educational objectives?
4. Write out in simple, nonpedagogic language the fundamental objectives for your own classroom, for your own school, for any one pupil.
5. What steps might be taken in your community to achieve better understanding of the assets and liabilities of the present school organization?
6. How may the formulation of desirable educational objectives for a community be initiated by a teacher, a principal, a superintendent, a school-board member?

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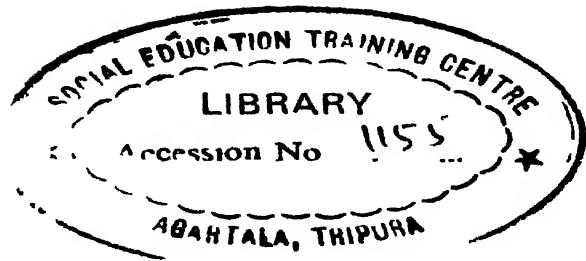
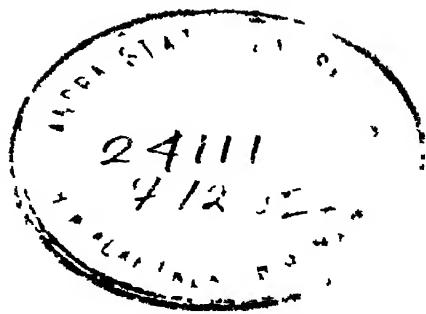
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THESE ARE YOUR SCHOOLS

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Good public relations actually is so simple, so easily attainable, so inexpensive, and so downright sensible that it is difficult to understand why some people persist in trying to make of it something mysterious or difficult. It is well to remember that everything you do, everything you say, contributes to somebody's opinion of you.<sup>1</sup>

## *The People Who Make Your Schools*

TWO

### **FACING THE ISSUE**

Long before one resorts to the familiar channels of public communication—publicity—careful consideration must be given to the initial and often basic impact of face-to-face relations. Cursory observation of any school or school system underscores the wisdom of first putting one's own house in order. When an administrator, teacher, or pupil makes friends with the public closest to him—students, faculty members, parents, or others—he gains confidence in himself and in the program he teaches or in which he participates.

Granted that schools exist for pupils; yet planned public relations must first be regarded in terms of professional personnel and their ability to initiate and carry on desirable human and educational programs. Pupils, parents, teachers,

<sup>1</sup> By permission from *Public Relations in Management*, by J. Handley Wright and Byron H. Christian. Copyright, 1949. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

administrators, and all members of the community come within the focus of effective school programs. Under ideal conditions each group comprehends its role in working with schools and assumes its responsibilities with understanding and enthusiasm. But programs which achieve such understanding and enthusiasm have had their beginnings somewhere.

### ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

By the very nature of responsibilities for leadership which accrue to school administration, the principal or superintendent can assume initiative for effective public relations on many fronts. A superintendent in one of the largest school systems calls attention to the challenge which faces all administrators:<sup>2</sup>

A harmonious school staff, working together toward common objectives, is good public relations for the school or school system as a whole. How important therefore that each teacher assume responsibility for making certain that individual relations with fellow teachers are the kind that will contribute to the combined total that is good public relations.

When unity prevails among teachers, the general public, those who support the schools, are more likely to recognize the necessity and the soundness of requests for higher salaries, for smaller classes, more adequate school facilities, and better and more plentiful tools of instruction.

Each of the attributes of personal and public relations mentioned in the preceding quotation carries definite administrative responsibilities with it, particularly from the

<sup>2</sup> Herold C. Hunt, *Chicago Schools Journal*, January–February, 1948, p. 52.

standpoint of responsibility for initiating action which leads to achievement and unity.

Persistent attention by the administration to the status of teachers as fellow workers in the total educational program is basic to good public relations. Formation of consultant groups to serve in an advisory capacity on matters of school policy furthers the kind of relationships which lead to a truly unified school personnel.

It has long been recognized that channels of communication, vital to programs of school-community relationships, must work both ways. On the one hand, ideas and policies must be transmitted from the superintendent to the principal and thence to the teacher and the pupil. On the other hand, reactions, suggestions, and (as situations permit) decision recommendations must flow from pupils and teachers to administrative personnel and on to school boards.

Nowhere does one find better evidence for thorough inter-communication than in curriculum development. Teachers participate at all levels in improving programs of instruction—from the determination of initial needs for improvement to the adoption of improved practices. Who else is in a position to gauge so well the needs of pupils, the attitudes of parents, and the possibilities of classroom application? The wise administrator recognizes that a cooperative endeavor in curriculum reorganization, with the administrator assuming leadership roles whenever necessary, does much more than merely improve classroom practice. Understanding of total school objectives, assumption of responsibility for policy determination in a most vital area, and willingness to bring sincerity and enthusiasm to an enterprise in which one has had a part are logical outcomes of such cooperative endeavor.

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The climate of opinion which determines teacher and pupil attitudes and relationships is directly affected by each administrator. The school principal who passes summary judgment on pupils and faculty members may generate fear and suspicion which alienate public support and understanding. The superintendent of schools who issues orders which brook no compromise or reaction from principals or teachers, who fails to remain friendly and receptive toward staff members and their ideas, who is unwilling to develop an attitude of mutual trust and cooperation—this superintendent restricts the development of desirable public relations among school personnel.

In order to achieve understanding and a harmonious atmosphere within the school personnel, basic obligations demand of each administrator:

1. Establishment of cooperative practice between teaching, supervisory, and administrative personnel.
2. Practice of the open-door policy in order to keep channels of communication operating from and to administrative personnel.
3. Continued inclusion of administrative and teaching personnel in formulating policy recommendations.
4. Continued stress on securing agreements on basic educational objectives so that unity of purpose and integrity of practice may be achieved.

## **TEACHING PERSONNEL**

The basic obligation of each teacher in helping to create effective public relations for a school or school system lies in the understanding of, and the sincere attempt to achieve, desirable educational objectives for each child. While the initial impetus to establish stated policies must come from

the administration and the school board, each teacher must assume a vital role in carrying out these policies to the utmost of his personal and professional competence.

It has been said that to make a friend a person must first be one. Nowhere does one find a clearer application of this adage than in teacher-teacher relationships. As each teacher assumes a higher regard for his own professional status, and as each teacher appreciates the contributions he makes to the total educational program, jealousy and secrecy surrounding effective practice tend to disappear. The principal of the school who recognizes the importance of good human relationships devotes considerable attention to promoting desirable teacher-for-teacher regard.

Each teacher possesses particular assets and weaknesses. Efforts to achieve understanding and pleasant human relationships must take into consideration that just as pupils learn from others, so do teachers. But public confessions of weaknesses are seldom constructive and are often embarrassing. Pooling of teachers' attempts to meet situations in the classroom, whether in history, plane geometry, or third-grade science, provides helpful suggestions to the teacher without requiring personal admissions of weakness.

The regard of one person for another is composed of many factors. No factor exceeds that of "fellow worker" in importance. The "one-big-happy-family" description of a school's personnel sometimes may have been grossly exaggerated, but the fact remains that it is important for each person to have contemporaries who take an active interest in his welfare. Certainly warm human relationships should exist in an enterprise so vitally concerned with human welfare as education. Doing friendly things for others, rallying around when a teacher needs help, reporting favorably on other teachers and administrators, giving credit where credit

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*is due, demonstrating understanding of another person's difficulties—a list of such admirable practices could be endless!* The following critical analysis bears repeating:<sup>3</sup>

. . . teachers and other staff members have all the frailties of normal human beings, plus, in some cases, shortcomings which would be less noticeable were they possessed by persons in other fields. Aloofness, indifference, smugness, pomposity, verbosity, partiality, tardiness, and forgetfulness are characteristics which, singly or in combination, can convert a great teacher into a definite public liability.

Since public opinion is an aggregate of individual opinions, the individual relations of each teacher with pupils and others become the crux of effective public relations. The task of retaining reasonable emphasis on curriculum and academic standards on the one hand, and of exercising high personal standards of analysis of and relationships with pupils on the other, must rank as the paramount challenge to each teacher and administrator in American education.

### PUPIL PUBLIC

Whether we like it or not, each pupil is a daily reporter on his school. If the school day goes well and the teacher and principal are helpful and human, the report is favorable. If lessons are not learned, or if the teacher reflects harassment (no matter what the cause), or if the pupil fails to recognize the sequence or purpose of the work done, the report at home may not be so favorable.

Certainly no one would justify an obvious attempt by a teacher to curry favor or gain popularity with pupils by any synthetic means. The fact remains, however, that pupils report much more fairly on classroom or school activities

<sup>3</sup> W. Emerson Reck, *Public Relations*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1946, p. 151.

*where they have a high regard for the teacher. And pupils have a high regard for the teacher who is firm but friendly, who possesses a sense of humor but who also believes that there is work to be done, and who is willing to tell them why they should learn and where they will use their knowledge.*

The leader of a group of children assumes a difficult role—especially with groups which vary from 25 to 45 or more. The sincere, competent teacher remains a human being, subject to error. Parenthetically, any honest parent admits to error too, even in working with but one, two, or three children. Effective public relations can be achieved more readily if errors are admitted and if major emphasis is placed upon succeeding steps which will prove beneficial to the child and to others. Determination of who is right and who is wrong, particularly in matters of conduct and discipline, tends to generate heat and raise blood pressures but offers little that is positive in providing a better situation for the child, the teacher, and the parents.

The *Code of Ethics* of the National Education Association states that:<sup>4</sup>

The primary obligation of the teaching profession is to guide children, youth and adults in the pursuit of knowledge and skills, to prepare them in the ways of democracy, and to help them to become happy, useful, self-supporting citizens. . . .

Many teachers attempt to meet the challenge in the preceding statement and with a noteworthy degree of success. Pupil approval, not only of the teacher but of the program of education, tends to follow a satisfactory pupil-teacher relationship.

<sup>4</sup> *Code of Ethics*, National Education Association, Washington, 1952, p. 4.

Good pupil-teacher relationships make possible the use of truly effective techniques of home-school public relations. Understanding of the daily and long-term objectives emphasized by each teacher and fortified by written reports which the pupil takes to his home, offers an instrument for good public relations which cannot be overestimated. Guidance by the teacher in formulating these objectives—through discussion, through appraisal of evident growth by pupils, and through displays of accomplishments—can aid immeasurably in achieving a more genuine understanding of the objectives of the total educational program. Whatever else may be true of the common methods of pupil reporting, few report cards offer the pupil or the parent substantial help in gaining an understanding of the pupil, the teacher, or of the educational objectives.

Pupils show a higher regard for the school if a consistent attempt is made to secure understanding of procedures followed. Policies on tardiness, on field trips, on care of school grounds, on care of school property, or on marking and promotion gain readier acceptance if they are brought into the realm of student discussion, student action, and, on occasion, student recommendation. Since most school pupils are born citizens, it is well to begin to instill the habits of good citizenship at an early stage of development and to increase the area of pupil participation and consequent assumption of responsibility at maturity. The directive role of the teacher and administrator is enhanced as understanding of policies and procedures replaces compliance because of fear or authority.

**LET PARENTS HELP**

While much has been done to mobilize parental interest in education, much more needs to be done. One of the com-

pelling laws of sound public relations is that both parties involved in a personal relationship shall benefit from that relationship. The fact that teachers and parents have one common interest—the welfare of children in a democratic society—is a priceless asset in planning school-public relations.

Many American parents regard the schools their children attend as almost perfect replicas of the schools they themselves attended. Like the customer in a store who requests a name product that he has used with satisfaction, the American parent would like to see a familiar pattern of education continued. Changes in the pattern of teaching or revision of academic content must offer the parent something better for his child. The parent must be convinced of the necessity of these changes in much the same way that he must be satisfied with the superiority of a new product over an old, familiar one. It is also significant that the person who recommends a new product or a change in educational procedure has a great deal to do with whether the product or the change will be accepted with understanding and appreciation.

Each person in each school should use every opportunity to develop the parents' understanding and personal knowledge of the educational program. When parents know and understand the school program, there is less opposition to progress and less interference with existing or contemplated procedures.

In Baltimore, Maryland, a committee made an extensive study to determine the kind of information desired by parents. As a result of this study, radical changes in the report-card system were proposed. The committee recommended new types of reports to give parents a comprehensive view of their children's progress—not alone in aca-

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demic subjects but in other areas of child development and in adjustment to group living and class participation. The conclusions drawn by this committee were:<sup>6</sup>

Baltimore parents, like all parents, want to know what real progress their children are making in school. They want to know if their children are learning the facts that are to be gained from studying the curricular subjects; but they want to know many other things about them—whether they are developing good work habits, learning to cooperate with others, working to the best of their abilities, adjusting themselves to social living and to group activities; they want to know if their children *are really doing the best they can and no parent has the right to expect more of a child.* To parents so interested, the new practice of reporting offers far more encouragement and will aid them in guiding the child better than the report that marks progress merely as "E" or "D," the symbols traditionally used by the Baltimore School System to indicate excellency and deficiency in child progress.

Parents will pay for what they want for their children. Administrators and teachers must point out, in terms of one pupil, the actual costs for instruction, equipment, textbooks, and supplies. What might be done with increased funds for each pupil becomes a follow-up step which promotes better understanding and often leads to increased appropriations. The more thoroughly the professional staffs of schools understand the aspirations and needs of the community, the more surely acceptable steps for progress may be outlined and achieved.

### EXAMPLES OF PARENT AND STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Quite often public schools, by means of "interest surveys," seek to discover what parents want to know about the

<sup>6</sup> *Baltimore Bulletin of Education*, June, 1949, p. 6.

schools. It is not surprising to find that classroom procedures tops the list. The big questions seem to be: What is being taught? How is it being taught? What are the objectives? Tell us about subject achievement, grade achievement, the use of maps, charts, books. Tell us how it is being done. How much learning is taking place? Do children learn better than they did a generation ago?

Often interest surveys take the form of questionnaires in which parents check the topics of most interest to them. Suggested topics may include attendance rates, classroom procedures, disciplinary problems, health problems, homework assignments marking systems, school expenditures, and many others.

Most parents express greatest interest in what happens to their child in the classroom. Is he progressing at a normal rate for him in academic subjects? Does he make friends easily with other children and join in their activities? How does he compare with other children in the class? Does he demonstrate special aptitudes in certain areas? Answers to such questions illustrate the importance of teacher familiarity with each child's total development as well as with subject-matter content.

Some excellent surveys have been used to sample public opinion for the types of information needed by schools before launching any program of public relations. Among the best of these are the Illinois Inventory of Pupil Opinion and the Illinois Inventory of Parent Opinion.

The main objection to the use of this type of survey has been answered in this way:<sup>6</sup>

There is here implied no suggestion that superintendents or teachers should renounce their leadership responsibilities.

<sup>6</sup> Harold C. Hand, *What People Think about Their Schools*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1948, p. 2.

Rather what is implied is that superintendents and the teachers can be effective in their public relations and personnel practices only to the degree to which they continuously increase their knowledge of the attitudes with which they are confronted.

The areas of conscious ignorance exposed as the result of survey tests were astonishing. Students in particular voiced loud protests about the things they disliked. In the words of the researchers who set up the diagnostic tests:<sup>7</sup>

Teachers are no longer under the necessity of guessing what, or how serious their problems of internal "public relations" are. Any school staff that wants to do so can secure dependable data concerning the number of pupils who are satisfied or dissatisfied with the school. Even more important, it can reliably identify the things which please or displease and know instead of guess how many pupils are satisfied or dissatisfied with each such specific.

The Student Inventory featured these areas for analysis:<sup>8</sup>

1. Feeling of belonging.
2. Treatment by other pupils—fairness and considerateness.
3. Opportunity to participate satisfactorily in extracurricular activities.
4. Fair treatment by teachers.
5. Attitude toward the value of study.
6. Help from teachers with schoolwork.
7. Too much or too little work assigned.

Parents were asked to fill out questionnaires containing questions on these general factors:<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Summarized from Harold C. Hand, Gilbert C. Finlay, and Ardwin J. Dolio, *Illinois Inventory of Public Opinion*, World Book Company, Yonkers, N.Y., 1948.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

1. Treatment of children by teachers. (It is inconceivable that any parent who feels his child is not being treated properly could be satisfied with the school.)
2. Sympathy and understanding. (Parents expect the teacher to know the child as a person.)
3. Treatment by other pupils.
4. Discipline. (Must not be too strict or too lax.)
5. Help with schoolwork.
6. Whether pupils learn to meet real-life needs.
7. Whether student has the opportunity to learn what the parent would like him to learn.
8. Participation in student activities. (Too few or too many is bad.)
9. Work load. (Neither too heavy nor too light.)
10. Money demands.
11. Homework.
12. Teaching methods. (There is perplexity and discontent because of mistaken beliefs or ignorance. Many schools fail miserably in making clear to parents the whys and wherefores of new and improved methods of teaching.)

Often parents do not view clearly what they want for their children, or they may expect achievement or distinction beyond the abilities of the child. With a known basis from which to work, effective planning for the child and for the schools can be accomplished. But most parents want the best for their children—always.

Reflect a moment on the truth of these few sentences:<sup>10</sup>

The passion of the American fathers and mothers is to lift children to higher opportunities than they themselves enjoyed. It burns like a flame in us as a people. Kindled in our country by its first pioneers, who came here to better the

<sup>10</sup> Herbert Hoover, *Chicago Schools Journal*, November–December, 1949.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

opportunities for their children rather than themselves, passed on from one generation to the next, it has never dimmed nor died.

### **EDUCATION AND UNIFIED EFFORT**

Teacher-parent planning has worked out splendidly in many communities where teachers and administrators have taken the initiative in organizing such projects. The superintendent of schools in Hinsdale, Illinois, used this letter in reporting such a project:<sup>11</sup>

Dear Parents:

As part of the school public relations program, the Health and Physical Education Department has prepared the enclosed twelve-page report. This publication presents an over-all picture of the Health and Physical Education program in the Hinsdale Public Schools and has been developed as part of our Cooperative Curriculum Revision Program in all subject areas.

Only through this type of planning by parents, teachers and students will we be able to meet adequately the needs of our boys and girls in developing strong bodies through the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and the habits of healthful living.

Yours very truly,

Compare the preceding report to parents with the following invitation issued in handbill form to citizens of another city:

The purpose of the organization is to find out what we are getting from our school system; what we want from our schools and how we can get what we want. The schools be-

<sup>11</sup> Used by permission of Harvey Dickinson, director of physical education, Board of Education, Hinsdale, Ill.

long to the people and we want the best values for dollars spent.

This call to arms sent out to parents is certain evidence that administrators, school-board members, and teachers either did not recognize the undercurrents of dissatisfaction in the community or were unwilling to face them with a planned program of action. Once parental or other groups are organized under the banner of negative criticism, the schools and all school personnel are placed on the defensive. How much better to make every attempt to secure parents' understanding of objectives, procedures, costs, and policies, so that leadership replaces defensive negativism.

Parents have a right and an obligation to know what is done in the schools and why it is done. The most successful procedures begin with deliberate programs to secure understanding of the schools and progress into programs planned to enlist parent participation in policy determination. After the parents' interest in curriculum and teaching methods has been proved, it seems feasible then to seek their advice on program revision. The professional staff assumes the obligation of documenting the needs for change, the basic techniques under which the changes will be planned, and the adaptations which will be made in school procedures and policies. Many a worthy plan aimed at securing the participation of parents has gone for naught because the professional staff invited the parents to participate in curriculum or policy revision before they themselves had reached agreement on the techniques and methods to be used. Parents expect teachers and administrators to provide the professional know-how—parents will provide the understanding, the support, and their most priceless possession, the children.

**SUMMARY**

Professional personnel in the schools must first understand the importance of public relations and the importance of good human relations before the customary techniques of publicity may be used.

The administration assumes an initiating and guiding role in any public-relations program.

The primary and most important public-relations job is good teaching.

The status of teachers, the regard of administrators for teachers, and their regard for administrators are of vital concern in any public-relations program.

School organization is improved by keeping channels of communication open both from and to administrators, teachers, pupils, and parents.

Teachers and supervisors should be included in determining policy.

School administration is obligated to set up activities which encourage staff cooperation.

Teachers must understand and practice worthwhile school objectives as a basis for good public relations.

It is desirable to establish the importance of each teacher and administrator in the total educational program.

The pupil is a most important public-relations agent in carrying information, opinions, and attitudes to the various publics.

Harmonious staff relations are reflected in the classroom, in pupils' attitudes, and in their reporting to the public.

Pupils need to understand the reasons for basic school objectives and policies.

Guided pupil reporting to the homes at frequent intervals

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facilitates parental understanding of the school's objectives and practices.

While much has been done to stimulate parental interest in education, much more can be done.

Parents want to know more about classroom procedures.

Guesswork as to what parents expect of their schools can be eliminated through use of interest questionnaires and other instruments to ascertain parental reaction.

Parent-teacher planning works effectively where proper planning by professional staff members precedes it.

School authorities should concern themselves with what communities expect of education before negative forces attack the schools.

Parents want better educational opportunities for their children.

### **QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What personal concern should each administrator demonstrate toward each teacher? Where is the line of demarcation in such personal interest?
2. What steps could be taken to improve the channels of communication in your own school system? in your own school?
3. Outline the basic objectives a teacher of English or mathematics might discuss with a class. Outline the areas of personal knowledge which each teacher should have of each child in order to achieve effective direction.
4. What procedures might be used by the teacher to have each child take home at weekly intervals written reports on achievements in music, industrial arts, mathematics, science, physical education, or social studies?
5. Describe the initial steps which might be taken to secure a picture of what your community really expects of its schools.
6. Under what conditions should parents be asked to parti-

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pate in revising the extracurricular program of the school? the sequence in citizenship training? the marking and reporting systems?

7. What steps may be taken by a faculty to increase the understanding of the school's program and of the part each plays in achieving this program?

8. What does any community gain through an effective program of public relations carried on by its schools? What does each teacher gain from such a program? each pupil? each administrator?

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Yet the time is not far off when the American people may seriously question whether their schools give them what they pay for in the form of free men.<sup>1</sup>

## *Basic Considerations*

THREE

### LETTING THE PEOPLE KNOW

When asked what sort of speech he intended to make at one of the United Nations sessions, Gen. Carlos Romulo, then president of the General Assembly, said, "I have two types. My Mother Hubbard speech is like the garment—it covers everything but touches nothing. Then there is my French-bathing-suit speech—it covers only the essential points."<sup>2</sup>

Be warned that this is the latter type of chapter. Every effort has been made to collect *practical*, meaningful guides for use by teachers in the somewhat neglected area of letting the public know what goes on behind school walls. It is a mistake to assume that the general public understands the objectives, the programs, or the achievements of the school.

<sup>1</sup> Horace M. Kallen, *The Education of Free Men*, Farrar, Straus & Young, New York, Copyright, 1949

<sup>2</sup> Mabina Stephensen, "Personal Glimpses," *Reader's Digest*, March, 1950, p. 129.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

There exists a wide gap between the school and the community, and that gap must be bridged.

Although it lacks some of the basic elements that characterize an exact science, good public relations proceeds on a plane as scientific as possible. Thus, synonyms for public relations often include such terms as engineering of consent, human relations, humanics (social science), or social engineering. The ultimate goal of all public relations is good will. On the one hand, good will may represent a tangible thing easily recognized by persons concerned with a certain movement; on the other hand, good will sometimes eludes exact description or objective evaluation. In the final analysis, good will depends upon the quality of relationships established between the operator and his several publics.

It is not enough to have a good program and effective techniques of instruction. There still remains the problem of telling about it and the more imperative duty of helping people to *understand* the educational pattern and its importance. The purposes of each subject area need to be clearly defined. The basis for public understanding and public support cannot be established unless that which goes on in schools for the development of youth is clearly demonstrated.

### **PUBLIC APPROVAL NEEDED**

In a democracy, the success of anything depends upon public confidence and public understanding. Public approval is vital. There must be a definite bid for lay interest and support. Schools exist because the public considers them desirable or, more accurately, the public has not pronounced them undesirable. Therefore, the schools must sell them-

selves to the public, not occasionally, not annually, but every day.

Education sorely needs a continuous, honest, and comprehensive program of interpretation to the public and the enlistment of its cooperation. The public must be convinced that education is organized and conducted as cheaply and efficiently as possible. School personnel must prove clearly that education is worth what it costs in time, effort, and money.

History reveals that the development of schools is based upon the understanding of, and belief in, education by the general public and upon the ability of the schools to interpret successfully the needs and accomplishments related to the program offered. The following statement represents a stern though appropriate reminder:<sup>3</sup>

The first item of public cost which gets cut in a depression, the first which is squeezed in a crisis is the school system. So recent is its establishment, so imponderable and still unfamiliar are its relations to free society, that custom combines with parsimony to keep its service to the growth of free men at a minimum.

#### **WHO AND HOW?**

There must be a deeper probe into the need for interpretation? Policies must be designed to win and hold the good will of everyone important to the schools. Who is to perform this job of interpretation? It would seem to be a task for all, with the teacher as the very heart of an effective public-relations program. No group can publicize and interpret the schools so well as those who know them best—the administrators and teachers. Another direct line to the public

<sup>3</sup> Kallen, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

is the pupil. Is he made aware of the educational values he receives?

Public relations offers no panacea for the ills that frequently confront education. Some misinformed persons believe that the mere establishment of a public-relations program will solve all the problems of public interest in, and support for, education. Things do not happen that easily. Public opinion is influenced by sound public relations, however, and education can achieve little without a favorable public opinion. This can be accomplished in one or more of three ways: (1) by reinforcing an existing and favorable public opinion, (2) by directing a laissez-faire opinion toward an active one, and (3) by changing an unfavorable opinion into one that supports the objectives of sound education.

How is it to be done? First of all, every program in education must rest on a fundamentally sound foundation; it must make sense in terms of the demonstrable happiness and well-being it brings to individuals both now and in the future. Next, comes the worthwhile task of keeping more people better informed about the work of these programs. Quite applicable here are the proved techniques used to sell other commodities and services to the public.

Successful representatives of commercial and industrial concerns need a good product or service to interest the prospective customer and to meet the competition of rival concerns. Likewise education must have a sound product (program) that the public believes in and supports, a program that stands high in the estimation of those who pay the bills for this and for numerous other public enterprises.

Equal in importance to the program itself is the contribution of a competent and loyal staff. Teachers who are deeply convinced of the value of the subject of their choice,

who believe wholeheartedly in the school they represent, usually make excellent ambassadors of public relations. Add to this professional competence, qualities of leadership, a pleasing personality, and the desire to share with others the fruits of school accomplishments, and teachers become virtual publicity agents for the dissemination of wholesome ideas among persons with whom they come into contact.

#### INDIFFERENCE TO PUBLICITY

A partial though nationwide survey conducted by the authors disclosed that schools in some ways have made good use of public relations. All too often, however, education has failed to realize the potentiality of publicity, as an important instrument for reaching a wider audience. With approved techniques it is possible through newspapers, radio, television, and other media to get better results with more people over a wider area more often and in less time. Yet publicity remains the most discussed but least understood of all the techniques of public relations.

Too little thought has been given to the training of teachers in finding and creating news items and in the mechanics of preparing and disseminating them. Many persons have yet to learn that much can be accomplished in interpreting the educational program by an indirect approach to the presentation of interesting information.

Benjamin Fine, educational editor of the *New York Times*, in a letter to the authors supports this contention and adds, "All too often the teachers are not able, or perhaps unwilling to cooperate in interpreting the schools. I feel that for the most part it is a matter of ignorance rather than indifference."

If the deterrent is unfamiliarity with publicity methods, that can be remedied. It is true that the media of publicity—

the tools by which publicity is transmitted—require understanding and correct evaluation. Necessary also is a working knowledge of the characteristics and standards of each medium and of the attitudes of men who control it. With limited preparation a teacher should be able to handle any tangible idea, demonstration, speech, report, survey, program objective—which may or may not in itself be news—so that news values will emerge.

**PUBLICITY IS RESPECTABLE**

Some teachers look upon publicity as showing off, as glorifying things that do not matter. They feel that publicity is a form of showmanship that cheapens the noble profession of education. These concepts are not true.

Good school publicity furnishes timely and accurate information—spoken, written, demonstrated, or shown—that is of interest and significance to the public; information designed to advance the interests of the schools and persons connected with them. It is an important part of the total public-relations program which includes the formulation and maintenance of policies to win and hold the good will of people who support a given institution. Personal contact and publicity are the most successful ways of bringing to people the story of the policies of the school.

Publicity is as honest and dignified as personal contact; it is also highly respectable. This is attested by the fact that the U.S. Air Force presented an Exceptional Service Award to its civilian public-relations director. This honor was bestowed personally by the Chief of the Air Force.

There is no place for high-powered press agents in education. There is, however, a place and an urgent need for school publicity with the objectives of (1) informing the public of work contemplated or being done, (2) establishing

confidence, (3) rallying support, and (4) correcting misunderstandings.

**DEFINITE PLANNING NEEDED**

Definite steps must be taken to find out what people think about the schools. If the thinking is unfavorable, then the next step is to change the practices or policies if these objections are reasonable.

If the schools are misunderstood, then there is a need to supply sufficient information to the public to educate it out of these misconceptions. School administrators should readily agree with this verdict: "School public relations which are satisfactory are those developed when the outcomes of the school enterprise are evaluated in terms of community and individual needs met."<sup>4</sup>

**CONTINUOUS PUBLICITY VERSUS PROPAGANDA**

In order to obtain enduring results, public relations must function continuously. It is not to be turned on and off whenever a pressure group feels that public support is needed. Continuous publicity tends to produce mutual understanding and respect; sporadic publicity smacks of propaganda and may lead to distrust.

An example of a sporadic activity occurred in New York City one year when the teachers faced a salary crisis. The influx of letters and comments to the educational editor of the *New York World-Telegram and The Sun* was newsworthy enough to justify a two-column story with the following headlines:<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> By permission from *The Administration of American Public Schools*, by Harlan L. Hagman. Copyright, 1951. McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1951.

<sup>5</sup> *New York World-Telegram and The Sun*, May 5, 1950.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

### **INDIGNANT AND SARCASTIC LETTERS**

#### **POUR IN ON SCHOOL EDITOR**

Most of the teachers in the city school system, it appears, have taken pen in hand—or have hitched up a typewriter—to let the School Editor know what they think of the \$150-\$250 raise offered to them by Mayor O'Dwyer. . . .

The letters made news because teachers seldom make an effort to get their side of the story to the public. About a month prior to this awakening, an alert young reporter on the same paper was complimented by an interested reader because of certain interpretative stories the reporter had written on recreation and safety. In the course of the conversation, the reporter was asked what kind of co-operation he had received from the schools in getting leads for educational stories. He had this to say: "There is no public relations to speak of below the college level. Now and then, we get some cut-and-dried press releases but no one ever calls up to point out possible news stories and features. I wish they would."

During one week of each year (American Education Week), about 10 million parents' and other interested citizens visit the schools. The basic objectives of American Education Week are, first, to obtain greater cooperation from parents in the work of the schools and, second, to enlist the interest of the greater public in supporting education more generously.

It is indeed unfortunate that *only* once each year are people encouraged to get a firsthand glimpse of education in action.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE WHOLE CHILD**

The materials and most of the examples contained in this book are applicable to every program in the school cur-

riculum. Naturally, some programs lend themselves more easily to public relations than others. For example, industrial arts, with its reasonably close association with industry in the community, may be easier to publicize than certain foreign languages. In like manner, dramatics usually has greater public appeal than written English. Music education often interests parents because children bring home the songs they have learned and the musical instruments they play at school. Health education should represent one of the easiest programs to dramatize because the child lives his health every day; it constitutes a subject of serious concern at home, and numerous agencies in the community deal with health problems. Unfortunately, however, some teachers and pupils look upon health as such a gloomy subject that it seldom attains the position it deserves as a sound public-relations medium.

Furthermore, intellectual bias is very strong in many schools and communities. In the erroneous thinking of some persons, a sort of dichotomy exists between the development of physical and social traits. This condition exists even though these same persons readily admit that modern programs of education have as their ultimate goal the development of well-rounded individuals who will be responsible citizens in a democratic society.

A realization of this trend is indicated in the report of a regional meeting of school superintendents. Fortunately, these men and women recognize the need for arousing a widespread interest in safeguarding and improving the total welfare of the nation's citizens. "Modern programs of education are seeking to develop the whole child. Intellectual development is recognized as but one phase of personality growth. . . ."\*

\* American Association of School Administrators, *Public Relations for American Schools, Twenty-eighth Yearbook, National Education Association*, Washington, 1950, p. 47.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

Sound public relations must take into account educating the whole child by spotlighting the activities, experiences, and participants in *all* school programs. Some programs need exploitation more than others to gain or maintain public support. In similar fashion, certain aspects of a given program may require public-relations attention lest parents and taxpayers obtain the wrong impression of the school's true and total objectives. Thus educators face a real problem in conducting a program of public relations that reflects proper balance in an honest attempt to educate the whole child.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS AT STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS**

The selling job must be done by teachers and supervisors on the local level or it will not be done at all. A survey shows that few superior public-relations efforts originate in state departments of education. Such programs are not readily discernible, although at least four states are actively doing a commendable job of interpretation—Washington, Texas, Indiana, and Illinois. From answers received to a three-question letter addressed to all state departments of education, here are typical replies in the “sorry, wrong number” vein:

1. We are really just becoming aware of the importance of public relations in this department of education.
2. In my opinion public relations for education is necessary, but I am very sorry we do not have materials that may be helpful in your study.
3. Public relations is one of our greatest needs, but as yet we have not done very much in that direction.
4. We rely chiefly on the natural and normal relationships with parents and other citizens for getting an interpretation of the schools before the public and for creating sympathetic and cooperative attitudes.

Much more than the "natural and normal relationships with parents and other citizens" is needed. Teachers and supervisors must concentrate on breaking through the shrouds of such complacency and attempt to imitate the kind of program which has produced admirable results in New Albany, Indiana.

*The New Albany plan.* In this community a substantial program of public relations is indeed a reality. The wide variety of means used to keep the community informed about the total school program is evidenced by the following activities:

1. Giving talks to parent-teacher groups on various subjects of public concern.
2. Assisting such civic-service organizations with their projects as the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and others.
3. Furnishing news releases on interesting items to local and nearby newspapers.
4. Participating in state education-association programs by the organization of district clinics.
5. Providing radio stations with spot announcements concerning special features.
6. Holding annual demonstrations using representatives from all schools.
7. Publicizing participation in the elementary-school athletic program.
8. Assisting with patrol-boy picnics and father-and-son banquets.
9. Awarding patrol-boy certificates of participation each year.
10. Assisting with the annual Education Week display at a local service company.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

11. Serving as host to visitors who come to observe the public schools.
12. Being selected by the Indiana University Audio-Visual Center as one of the outstanding school systems in the country and having one of the elementary classes used as a model in the production of a motion picture.
13. Producing a United Nations pageant before the Parent-Teacher Association Council using junior-high-school children and producing a radio pageant of the same type using physically handicapped children from one of the elementary schools.
14. Publishing Indiana Economic Council booklet "It's about Time."
15. Giving a special pageant with physically handicapped youngsters as participants.

### **SUMMARY**

Subject areas must be explained more fully to the general public in order to win and hold good will.

Teachers must take the initiative in keeping more people better informed.

Self-preparation helps in making the best use of publicity media.

The program itself, coupled with an efficient and loyal staff, serves as the foundation for all public relations.

School publicity is timely and accurate information—written, spoken, or demonstrated—with news value designed to advance public interest in, and support for, the schools.

Public relations is the formulation and maintenance of policies designed to win and hold, through publicity and personal contact, the good will of people.

Modern programs of education seek to educate the whole child. This concept places a serious responsibility on those

concerned with public relations if parents and taxpayers are to understand the school's true and total objectives.

The superior jobs of public relations are done by teachers and supervisors, and for the most part in local communities.

To keep a community informed, a wide variety of public relations techniques must be used.

**QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of delegating all publicity responsibilities to a director of school public relations.
2. Is not education generally accepted as being indispensable? Why, then, is it necessary to prove this fact?
3. Discuss the difference between publicity and public relations.
4. How can teachers better prepare themselves to take advantage of the many opportunities for public relations and publicity?
5. What is meant by an "indirect approach" to the dissemination of interesting information?
6. Since publicity is considered so important, should teachers be paid for the time they devote to it? always? never? under certain conditions? Explain your answer.
7. Because superintendents make an accounting to the public through periodic reports, why are these not enough?
8. Under what conditions, if ever, should teachers write indignant letters to the school editor of a daily paper demanding pay increases?
9. What opportunities are afforded in your community to promote satisfactory publicity?
10. Why do not more teachers use modern and approved methods to secure community interest in, and support for, public education?
11. It has been said that "all publicity is public relations but not all public relations is publicity." To what degree do you agree with this statement?

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

12. What forces of public opinion have been transmitted into public action affecting education?

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Seldom have so many people demonstrated keen and vital interest in the public schools, and seldom have the schools stood in greater need of public understanding and support.<sup>1</sup>

## *Why Public Relations?*

FOUR

During the first quarter of the present century, the term "publicity" was used to explain what is now called "public relations." Broadly speaking, one might define public relations as personal and group action that affects social attitudes and behavior toward a given product or issue. In a positive sense, public relations may be defined as the art and science of persuading people in favor of the product or issue represented by an individual or group. The difference between individual action and group action in public relations constitutes a difference in degree rather than in kind; in either event, actions speak louder than words. If the public does not openly favor a given issue, a large segment of the public may actually oppose the issue under consideration. No public enterprise can succeed indefinitely unless a large part of the public supports it.

<sup>1</sup> American Association of School Administrators, *Public Relations for America's Schools*, Twenty-eighth Yearbook, National Education Association, Washington, 1950, p. 5.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

Every teacher has a personal stake in public relations. His work and the work of his associates depend on whether he practices good public relations. He must face the fact that he is a part of, and should be vitally interested in, an enterprise which in terms of public funds ranks near the top of the nation's expenditures. He should realize also that in a democracy public opinion determines the success or failure of any institution dependent on public support. The development of schools is based on the ability of the general public to understand and believe in the values of the educational program.

Wilder astutely observes that:<sup>2</sup>

If any school person says, "I do not care what the public thinks about my school," that teacher, administrator or board member is a liability to all schools. No public school has any moral right to allow itself to be unexplained, misunderstood or publicly distrusted; for by its unpopularity it poisons the pond in which we all must fish.

### THE PUBLIC MUST KNOW

Personal recognition and professional gain go hand in hand with good schools and excellent programs—provided of course that people know about the schools and programs. No one thinks ill of the American Red Cross and other charitable agencies for acquainting people with their services and needs. Why should schools refrain from telling their honest and straightforward story with the specific purpose of building and holding good will?

Derryberry, a public-health executive, believes that service and public relations go hand in hand.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ira Wilder, Editorial, *New York State Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation*, Spring, 1951.

<sup>3</sup> Mayhew Derryberry, Symposium, *American Journal of Public Health*, March, 1950.

No organization can render maximum service without good public relations. If it is to serve most effectively, and be adequately financed, the people must know the functions of the organization, understand its problems and appreciate its importance.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS NECESSARY**

Some teachers labor under the misapprehension that extolling the virtues of their programs means seeking publicity for selfish reasons. If with such so-called selfishness they improve the program and help in its interpretation, the entire community reaps the benefit. Of course, to ignore completely the desire for self-advancement is about as unrealistic as looking in a dark room for a black cat that is not there.

To think only in terms of selfish recognition, however, is equally untenable. Schools are established and supported to serve the needs of youngsters and the community, and the public will not continue indefinitely to support schools solely to provide good salaries and a comfortable living for teachers.

Modern parents have learned to expect certain things of the teaching staff beyond mere instruction in subject matter. They want teachers to respect the dignity of each child and to take into account individual personalities. They expect teachers to become acquainted with parents and to look forward to meeting them on occasions of social and professional nature. Parents want to know what is happening in the schools they support, what the needs are, and what accomplishments have been made.

**THE PROGRAM MUST BE EXPLAINED**

In summary, good public relations are necessary (1) to secure continued and stronger support, (2) to make an ac-

counting of things accomplished, (3) to advance the educational program, and (4) to promote the concept of school and community partnership. People have a right to ask, as they often do, "Are we getting our money's worth from the schools?"

Too often there exists a feeling of dissatisfaction about the adequacy of the educational system and the results obtained. The public-school program must be explained and made more intelligible. As Yeager points out, "Education has a definite function to perform. Its purposes must be explained. The needs of the school must be comprehended by the whole community."<sup>4</sup>

#### HURDLING THE OBSTACLES

Have the schools succeeded in formulating and maintaining policies designed to win and hold the good will of important people? Educators are the first to agree that at best such policies have been spotty and somewhat inadequate.

High on the list of failure described by a fact-finding commission on education in Connecticut was the policy of "isolation of the school." The need for a "prodigious" raising of sights on purposes, problems, and possibilities and the development of a real partnership between school and community was cited as the prime requirement of the state's educational system.

There are some particles of truth in the criticism of educators that the public is to blame. "People don't want to hear about the schools," they say. They refer to the fact that people are only mildly interested in attending school meetings and in reading annual reports. This is all the more

<sup>4</sup> William A. Yeager, *School-Community Relations*, The Dryden Press, Inc., New York, 1951, p. 111.

reason why educators should increase their efforts to create a higher potential of public interest in education.

Most teachers of specialized subjects in secondary schools can ill afford complacent attitudes in this matter. Subjects such as art, music, industrial arts, home economics, health education, safety, and physical education belong in this category. One might take a similar position about other subjects in the curriculum or about school administration. The so-called "special subjects," however, mean different things to different groups of people. For this reason, sincere effort is required to establish public understanding and acceptance of these significant educational programs.

#### MISCONCEPTIONS NEED CHANGE

The general public seldom acquires true concepts about a program when teachers in that program belittle the profession they represent. In an Eastern city, for example, a newspaper report of a speech carried the following headline: COACHES CAN BE CULTURED, CLAIMS COACH. In defending the profession of physical education against the label of "muscle men," unlearned in literature and music, a high-school coach boasted in a speech that he, a violinist himself, had earned a degree in business administration, not physical education. He listed other high-school coaches who possessed academic degrees and who had earned licenses as teachers of academic subjects.

With this kind of defeatism, is it any wonder that a delegate in the Massachusetts House of Representatives voiced the fear that ". . . coaches would be placed in the same category as school teachers if the House passed a bill requiring school committees to give coaches a hearing before firing them?"

An open letter by a high-school teacher to the *New York*

*World-Telegram and The Sun* speaks for itself. It reads in part:<sup>5</sup>

. . . academic teachers in the high schools would be overjoyed if plays, concerts and operettas were abandoned forever. . . . The aggregate participants in such activities may run to 300 students in some high schools. Abandon such activities and watch your teacher morale improve.

When persons wonder why a given subject should be taught in school or why it should be regarded as vital to the complete education of youth, it is largely because the true value of education through the medium of that particular subject has been misunderstood. Public support cannot be gained for an enterprise about which parents and taxpayers know little, especially when the little they do know is twisted and distorted.

What do people know about physical education, art, the social sciences, guidance, health education, or a half-dozen other programs? What attitudes need to be changed? The average person reacts in terms of his own experiences and by what he hears, by what he reads, and by what he sees. It is no surprise, therefore, that many individuals regard physical education, for example, as synonymous with muscle building, sports, or a waste of time.

In a series of spot interviews of the public conducted by the authors, the question was asked: "What is your conception of physical education?" The following samples of answers reveal a fair cross section of understanding in various parts of the country, as expressed by parents and students:

I suppose physical education consists of gathering 40 or 50 pupils in a gymnasium, leading them in a few exercises, throwing them some balls, and chasing them about until they

<sup>5</sup> *New York World-Telegram and The Sun*, Feb. 2, 1950.

get up a lather or perspiration; then herding them into a shower to wash it off.

Learning and playing games.

I guess it is just a matter of teaching kids how to play football, baseball, and most of the other games kids play.

Physical education is a waste of time, just another way of wasting public money; children get enough exercise and play without anyone showing them how to do it; we got along without it before, and there's no reason why they can't now; it's just a racket!

Muscle-building exercises.

To me it's making big muscles out of little ones.

To me a bother; I don't care for it and I don't participate in any of the activities.

Physical education is the period in school when children go outside or to the gymnasium and have fun—play games, run around, and are taught various stunts by the teacher.

It is used in the schools to build strong bodies, and it gives children an opportunity to get away from their academic subjects to relax and break up the school day.

I think physical education is beneficial but not essential because cultural things last much longer than physical fitness.

A good thing that keeps you strong.

Physical education is a subject in the curriculum of our schools; it deals with educating the pupil physically.

Education of the body, to be able to play a game or take part in a sport and enjoy it.

It teaches me games I like to play after school and on Saturday with my friends.

My children are learning in physical education to play by themselves and with others both skillfully and in a friendly manner.

The coeducational classes in physical education at our high school help to establish wholesome boy-girl relationships.

My children go to the physical-education teachers in our school with personal problems.

An excellent laboratory for developing leisure-time skills and interests.

The above statement clearly reflect three types of programs and public relations: good, laissez-faire, and poor.

A similar situation prevails in other subject areas. For example, educators often take it for granted that students, parents, teachers, and others have a clear understanding of the purposes which underlie the teaching of English. Yet typical answers to the question "What do you learn from English classes?" given to students include "About a bunch of dead authors and how to write letters." "How to write and how to read." Just what I have to; I could use help in learning to speak better, though."

In another school, however, a clearer understanding was evidenced by student answers given to this same question. "We learn to read better, to speak better, and to find information when we need it." "We're learning to think and speak on our feet, to locate good material, and how to organize our material." "We're finding out about many kinds of literature and learning to read it better." "We've learned how to speak better and how to organize facts and ideas from what we read or hear."

These contrasts present widely different levels of understanding and widely different bases from which public relations generate.

All too frequently, improvements in school practice are attacked and impaired unless persons responsible for these improvements establish public understanding. Consider the plight of a school superintendent in a Middle Western city who announced the introduction of a program to improve

reading in the junior and senior high schools. Within a short time, this administrator was accused of:

1. Establishing the program to obtain data for his doctoral study. (This comment was from two teachers.)
2. Believing that pupils in his town were inordinately backward.
3. Failing to secure the facts before he wasted the town's money.
4. Having lost confidence in the teaching staff.
5. Knowing very little about what went on in the schools.
6. Trying to make a name for himself.

Fortunately, test evidence and reports from teachers and principals furnished adequate proof of the need for reading improvement in these schools. But the superintendent's failure to work with the teaching and administrative staffs, together with his failure to keep the public informed, prevented the reading-improvement program from accomplishing the desired purpose.

#### **REASONS FOR MISCONCEPTION**

These varied concepts should be disturbing when one considers that all education exists by public approval. The broadest, richest program often fails if it does not have public support.

What is responsible for the confused maze of opinions? One thing—a lack of public understanding and confidence based on one or on a combination of such factors as inferior programs, a multiplicity of confusing programs, a disturbing contrast between objectives and their attainment in practice, opinions of students who receive improper instruction, ideas of misinformed people, teachers who lack

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skill in leadership, or (saddest of all from the standpoint of public relations) good programs without sound public relations.

Some of these problems lie beyond the province of this book. The real concern is with teachers who have worthwhile programs but who refrain from telling others about these programs. Their course of instruction aims at the enrichment of general education, at the development of well-rounded individuals as responsible citizens in a democratic society. They help to mold individuals who possess vigor, strength, and character, with ability to get along with others; they provide opportunities for students to learn how to control the emotions and to find outlets that lead to self-esteem and to self-realization. They do all this in a society that sincerely places a high value on the happiness of children and the future welfare of the nation.

Again the question might be asked, "How well do teachers interpret to the public the problems and accomplishments of education?" Remember, the public has to be reminded constantly of the sound purposes and services of a worthwhile community enterprise. The people can change anything in a democracy nevertheless, all community enterprises must win and hold public favor in order to survive. Education and the subject areas in it are governed by policies of boards of education who guard the taxpayers' money.

Not to be minimized in importance are the extracurricular activities in schools; an interpretation of these is equally essential. Again, as in academic areas, a sound *program* of extracurricular activities is the best medium of public relations. Yeager sounds a warning about extracurricular activities when he writes:<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 204.

Since all too often the school rises and falls in the public's judgment by the success or failure of its activities, it is important that they (extracurricular activities) be properly administered as an integral part of the educational program. Care should be taken that the following impediments which concern the community be removed: (1) too great emphasis on the activity program or any part of it; (2) evils which have become associated with them, such as gambling in connection with athletics; (3) loss of control by school authorities; (4) pupil neglect of their studies for these activities; (5) excessive cost to parents for dues, fees, and other expenses, especially to those of low income; (6) evening affairs which keep pupils out at unreasonable hours; (7) improperly chaperoned affairs with resulting family and public concern; (8) activity schedules which require pupils to be away from home when needed by parents for home chores; (9) excessive individual pupil load which, together with home and community responsibility, makes too great a drain on a pupil's physical capacity.

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS IN OTHER AREAS

Why public relations? Take a lesson from big business, labor unions, churches, police departments, the American Medical Association, voluntary welfare agencies (such as the American Red Cross, the Children's Aid Society, the Community Chest, March of Dimes), and other groups too numerous to list. They have discovered the answer to sound public relations and the answer has paid rich dividends.

In a letter to the authors, Allan L. Swim, publicity director of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, candidly volunteers the following information:

We believe that many of the difficulties which have confronted our organization . . . and which confront it now . . . were the results of misinformation or the lack of in-

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formation about our aims and objectives and the things we have accomplished in the past. Consequently, much of our time is devoted to providing accurate information about the various projects we sponsor.

I believe the leaders of our organization will agree with my statement that the C.I.O. would never have reached its present size and would never have accomplished as much as it has if the organization had not established a public relations organization almost as soon as it was founded.

The New York City Police Department is equally alert to the value of public relations and points out to its employees, "The Department must collectively and individually demonstrate the knowledge, technique and capacity to provide the type of police service which the public expect from it." The purpose of carefully planned public relations is explained by the New York City Police Department in a letter to the authors containing the following comments:

The success of a police force in the performance of its duties is largely measured by the degree of support and co-operation it receives from the people whom it serves. It is of paramount importance, therefore, to secure for this Department the self confidence, respect and approbation of the public. The cultivation of such desirable attitudes on the part of the public is dependent upon reciprocal attitudes on the part of the Department. In accordance with the concept of mutual good will, a program to enhance good public relations is designed for active participation therein by every member of the Department.

The American Medical Association with its 140,000 members allotted 3 million dollars for public relations in order to acquaint the public with a twelve-point program for improving national medical care, its substitute for a proposed Federal health-insurance plan. The Association established

its public-relations program with a threefold purpose: (1) to aid the national, state, and local medical societies in their problems and programs, (2) to build and maintain good will for the medical profession, and (3) to utilize fully the power of public relations to advance the health and welfare of the American people.

It is not strange in these days to observe that churches recognize the value of public relations. Nearly 2,000 years ago the Great Teacher spoke: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," and "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

The March of Dimes story has become a classic example of eliciting public support. The Warm Springs Foundation in Georgia was faced with an annual deficit of \$170,000. In attempting to raise more money, someone proposed a President's birthday ball. After much planning, 58,000 towns held similar balls on the same night and as a result, \$1,040,000 was raised. The following year the fund was increased to \$1,400,000. A carefully planned and continuous public-relations job succeeded in identifying the institution with the interests of people. The story of crippled children was forcefully presented to the public.

The National Jewish Welfare Board alerts its many subsidiary centers throughout the country with a manual from its Bureau of Public Information. The manual emphasizes the vital need for a public-relations program with this introduction:<sup>7</sup>

Public relations in the broadest sense is the art of making the public understand what an organization or movement is doing, why it is doing it, whom it serves and how it con-

<sup>7</sup> From the manual, *Public Relations for the Jewish Community Center*, by Bernard Postal, director of the Bureau of Public Information of the National Jewish Welfare Board.

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tributes to the welfare of the community as a whole. Thus, public relations helps achieve participation in, and wins recognition, status, and support for, the organization or movement with which it is concerned.

The Morris County Tuberculosis and Health Association of Norristown, New Jersey, sponsors health-education workshops, send out a Dental News Letter and *Your Health Reporter*, and in general does a splendid job of selling health education to the people of New Jersey. In 1946 it pioneered the first eye-health mobile unit and more recently added a preventive heart-program unit.

Public relations gave The Boy Scouts of America its initial impetus. Since 1910 the organization has capitalized on these factors: (1) surrounding its program with romance and vigorous outdoor activities; (2) emphasizing the qualities of good citizenship; (3) associating the interests of the organization with those of the community; (4) recruiting volunteer leaders so that the community feels a sense of personal identification with the cause; and (5) telling its story simply and truthfully through all available channels, with the continuous job of keeping the public informed about the organization and about the services it renders.

### SOME COMMUNITIES KNOW WHY

Invariably, outstanding programs of public relations pay rich dividends in wholehearted community support for education. Schools have benefited greatly in such communities. Numerous school systems have found the answer to "Why public relations?"

The schools of Cincinnati, Ohio, have done a tremendous job in alerting the public to the accomplishments and needs of education.

The public schools in Hinsdale, Illinois, gained increased support after a curriculum-revision program. The superintendent saw to it that the community obtained a picture of the total program of education by means of illustrated reports and the use of other media.

When Herold C. Hunt was school superintendent in Kansas City, Missouri, he gained the sincere thanks of thousands of citizens, among other ways, by releasing school finance reports that could be understood. Another asset to improved public relations was the good job of educational publicity through cooperative radio stations.

The Jersey City Board of Education published a complete pictorial report with the following message directed to the people by the chief executive officer:<sup>8</sup>

I would that it were possible for me to conduct each one of you personally through our schools. . . . Since it is difficult for you to visit our schools, I am taking this means of bringing the schools to you. Through the magic of the camera and the aid of the printed word you will be able to observe our children as they participate with whole hearts, alert minds, and willing hands in all the activities which go to make up a balanced and well-rounded education.

Burbank, California, opened its school buildings and facilities for recreation, special services, meetings, adult education, and community groups. Then a complete report was made through the official publication of the school system.

Baldwin, New York, enthusiastically supports its schools. Physical education, among other subjects, enjoys support through the efforts of the director of physical education for girls, Ethel T. Kloberg, a real pioneer in realizing that a

<sup>8</sup> *With Heart, Head and Hand: A Tour through the Public Schools of Jersey City* (Jersey City, N.J., Board of Education), 1949, p. 7.

sound program will be supported if the public knows what it is all about.

Edwin W. Broome, the school superintendent in Montgomery County, Maryland, wrote: "A school system is obligated to keep abreast of the progress that is being made within the profession. It is also obligated to provide means for informing the public of the reasons for significant changes in procedures."<sup>9</sup>

The city of Baltimore, Maryland, established a bureau of statistics and research which has been invaluable to the Department of Education. Teachers and others are oriented in numerous aspects of public relations for the schools.

A physical-education festival was held in Laporte, Indiana, and an attempt was made to reach the public by means of an illustrated report with the message "Health Is Important, Too."

Chicago, Illinois, benefits greatly through the work of its Citizens School Committee. Understanding the schools is aided by a teachers' in-service education program.

The Texas State Department of Education was one of the first to issue public-relations pamphlets covering the major fields of public education.

Great Neck, New York, with a forward-looking superintendent of schools and a resourceful director of health and physical education, has set up a youth community-center program that is difficult to match. It is no surprise, therefore, that Superintendent John L. Miller had this to say in the first issue of *Educationally Speaking*: "An informed public is essential to intelligent functioning in a democracy. Democracy's schools must, therefore, depend to a great

<sup>9</sup> *Of the Children*, Superintendent's Report, Preface, Board of Education, Montgomery County, Maryland, 1948.

degree on sound thinking based on adequate information."<sup>10</sup>

Loundes County, Alabama, is sure to benefit by its recreational-leadership training course and by the booklet made available to every teacher.

The Albuquerque, New Mexico, school system also has done an excellent public-relations job with its pamphlets and booklets.

In Vermont the director of recreation was able to report, "Recreation for all in Vermont is being recognized as a basic need. Many gains have been made in communities large and small."

The Fairlee Village School, Vermont, introduced square dancing in the public-school curriculum in what has become known as the "Fairlee Experiment."

New Castle, Indiana, improves its public relations through action. As a result, sixth-grade children have an opportunity to attend camp at Versailles State Park.

Contra County, California, and the Norristown, Pennsylvania, school district, recognize the value of public relations by issuing booklets on various aspects of the school program.

The *Evening Standard* in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, devoted an entire supplement to the city schools in action. The streamer headline read GOOD ATHLETIC PROGRAM VALUABLE ASSET. Another lead story was headed RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL.

Mishawaka, Indiana, acquaints the public with school affairs by means of excellent exhibits, dance revues, and other media.

Washington is one state with an advisory committee on

<sup>10</sup> *Educationally Speaking* (Great Neck, N.Y., Board of Education), February, 1949. (Mimeographed.)

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the schools' responsibility in human growth and public relations. In addition, demonstration groups are available in square dancing and in other school activities.

The Institute for Education by Radio, of the Ohio State University, called national attention to a top publicity job for health education in Travis County, Texas, with a first-place award in 1949. Earning the prize was a series of thirty 15-minute radio health quizzes. The programs entitled "Healthful Living" were written by staff members at the University of Texas and sponsored by 21 cooperating agencies. The incomplete results were "electrifying" according to the Bureau of Research in Education by Radio, of the University of Texas. The effectiveness of the program was reflected in increased health interest among children and teachers. During the first three months the programs were on the air, requests were made for 43 speakers for meetings dealing with community health. The Travis County school superintendent reported that more attention was given to health in that one year than during all the time he had held this position. One teacher stated that for the first time, in her thirty years of teaching pupils really wanted to study health.

It is indeed unfortunate that it is not possible to measure scientifically the dividends produced by the above cross section of good public-relation programs. Few will dispute the fact, however, that sound education and an enlightened public go hand in hand.

### **SUMMARY**

Teachers must practice good public relations in their own interests and for the benefit of the profession they represent.

Public relations are necessary (1) to secure continued

and stronger support, (2) to render an accounting, (3) to advance the educational program, and (4) to promote the concept of community partnership in educational affairs.

Too often the contributions that education makes to democratic leadership are kept secret.

Many times teachers find it difficult to answer simple questions about the program they represent.

Knowledge of the program is essential to understanding. Understanding is basic to appreciation. Appreciation is basic to support.

Mistaken attitudes about education need to be changed by accurate information.

Confused opinion may result from one or a combination of such factors as inferior programs, misguided programs, an uninformed public, or incompetent teachers.

Most business, professional, and welfare organizations give special attention to public relations.

A well-written and accurate newspaper story or report can work wonders in promoting understanding.

Several communities have answered with action the question "Why public relations?"

#### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the reasons why so many people have varied concepts of education.
2. Does not the very fact that the schools are publicly supported indicate that the people in general believe in the value of education? Discuss this with reference to what should be done.
3. Should athletic coaches be regarded as teachers? Discuss the differences, if any, in the objectives and methods employed by coaches and teachers of physical education. In accordance with modern concepts of education, what decision do you reach with reference to the terms "regular" versus "special" teachers and "curricular" versus "extracurricular" activities?

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4. Suppose the staff agrees that the program in reading is not up to approved standards. What steps should be taken by the staff to publicize needed improvement in the reading program?
5. Should educators be more or less publicity-minded than employees of other municipal departments? How about education as compared with private business or commercial enterprise, labor organizations, welfare agencies, professional associations?
6. Compare the techniques described in the last section of the chapter that lists the ways in which several communities have gained publicity for their educational programs. Which of these techniques appear most valuable to you? least valuable? Describe several others with which you are familiar.

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Beneath the social veneer that surrounds each one of us, we are much alike—just plain people. If your message or mine is important enough, and if we have the ability to present it in a convincing manner, the message will gain attention. We may have to overcome strong opposition—the folks antagonistic to our measure or those who do not agree wholly with our point of view, and the folks more concerned with affairs that have little or no relationship to the subject of our choice. But good ideas, expressed in simple and forceful language, finally reach the human mind and impel men to action.

## *The Public and How It Can Be Reached*

FIVE

The creation of good will at every point of contact between teachers and the public is a *must*. The sum total of all impressions—appearance, actions, speech, and writings of every person associated with a school program—contributes to the general opinion.

Yet, it is not enough to woo only the groups that come into direct contact with the schools, since many families have no children of school age. A friendly and favorable attitude must also be created among the general public, as distinguished from those small segments of the public comprising the teachers and parents of school-age children. Much more than the usual face-to-face public relations is needed. Hundreds of different publics exist, each bound to another by some common bond or interest. These various groups play an important part in community life and, to a great extent, crystallize public opinion.

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### **THE MANY PUBLICS**

Every organization, every religious, vocational, political, or special-interest group, constitutes a public. Since publics overlap, one individual may belong to many publics. A given person may be (1) in a low-income group, (2) a white-collar worker, (3) a Protestant, (4) a salesman, (5) an Elk, (6) a member of the American Legion, (7) a registered Democrat, (8) between twenty-one and forty years of age, (9) of Italian descent, and (10) a suburban resident.

This man, like many others, is not a member of a single public which the schools can reach through normal channels of contact relations. This means that he is not (1) a parent of a student, (2) a member of the parent-teachers association, (3) an alumnus, or (4) a student. Yet, he votes, pays taxes, and has an equal voice with parents of school children in determining school expenditures and policies.

The nature and desires of each of the many publics must be determined so that various media of communication that shape public thinking can operate effectively. This explains why public-relations programs usually are directed at specific groups. In the campaign of successful public relations, the target is a particular segment of the populace; the weapons, effective and truthful publicity.

The U.S. Air Force and other military organizations make their appeals for recruits to schools and to such organizations as the Boy Scouts of America and the Young Men's Christian Association. In this case, the target is the adolescent-age group because obviously the future of military strength rests on the shoulders of today's youth.

Schools must direct their programs at not one but many

publics. In education the public is *everyone*. The community is people—all kinds of people. Since group opinion is a composite of individual opinion, a conscious effort must be made to direct the impressions gained by the community.

Opinions in their formulative stages are influenced by basic elements such as vested interests, personal gain, civic pride, and the desire for community progress or improvement. The public is interested in results. Values in an educational program must be translated into realities that fill specific wants or meet specific needs. Interpretation of the schools to the supporting public should be universal, comprehensive, and intelligent. Such publicity should stress the value of education to society in general as well as the value which accrues to individuals and families.

#### **PERSONAL RELATIONS AND PUBLICITY**

The influences which govern opinion are found in the average home and community. These influences are conditioned by the means employed to gather information—newspapers, radio, television, and other forms of communication. In brief, the publics can be reached through personal relations and through publicity using such media as:

<b>FACE-TO-FACE RELATIONS</b>	<b>PUBLICITY</b>
Students	Press
Parents	Radio
Talks	Magazines
Letters	Films
Telephone	Pictures
Television	Pamphlets
Demonstrations and exhibits	School paper
Community planning	Bulletin board

SIMPLICITY NEEDED

Surveys indicate that teachers do a great deal more with face-to-face public relations than with publicity. As a result, only a limited number of publics normally are reached, and many groups whose support is vitally needed are overlooked. Reaching more people involves the use of numerous publicity methods. It also requires simplicity, simple definitions, and summarized concepts. Information must not lead to confusion.

The first step is to translate the policies, programs, and actions of the schools into simple and understandable expression. Such expression tends to create in the public mind a true and accurate impression of the vital role education plays in American society. This means the elimination of pompous double talk and statements of objectives that are long, ponderous, and difficult to understand. Everything said or written must be directed toward an audience that, as it increases in size, includes more and more people with less and less formal education.

As an example, note the findings of Flesch as the result of a study he made. Twenty per cent of the readers never heard of the Bikini bomb test. Fifty-two per cent of American farmers never heard of the Marshall Plan. Thirty per cent of the citizens of a large Middle Western city never heard of the United Nations.<sup>1</sup>

Then there is the story of a motion-picture company that polled audiences on advertising with or without adjectives. It turned out that one out of three persons did not know the meaning of the word "adjective."

Another survey by an editor of the Gallup Poll showed

<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Flesch, *The Art of Readable Writing*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1949, p. 11.

that nearly 40 per cent of the adults of this country do not know what a tariff is. One out of four persons had not the faintest idea of what inflation is. The term filibuster was complete "Greek" to one-half of the nation's voters, while nine-tenths of them did not know what a reciprocal-trade treaty is. In spite of all the thousands of newspaper stories about jurisdictional strikes in recent years, two-thirds of the people did not know what a jurisdictional strike is. Only four persons in ten had any idea of what is meant by the electoral-college voting system. Less than half of the American adults knew how many United States senators there are from each state. Only half knew the number of years a member of the House of Representatives is elected to serve.<sup>2</sup>

The indications are clear, therefore, that one must use understandable language in reaching the public. There is no place for dignified, stodgy, wordly messages that lack terseness or snap. Teachers and other educators often write in stilted English because they assume the public expects them to write that way. Most persons use rhetoric in keeping with their place in society or the place they would like to occupy.

Many people find it difficult to understand everyday words. A striking example of this fact is taken from a report by the radio and television columnist of the *New York Herald-Tribune*.<sup>3</sup> Crosby calls attention to a portion of the "Candid Camera" program wherein an attempt was made to find out how many people knew what the word "retroactive" means. Here is what happened:

. . . That tireless investigator of other people's business, Allen Funt, took his "Candid Camera" and his concealed microphone out the other day to find out how many people

<sup>2</sup> William A. Lydgate, editor of Gallup Poll, *Redbook*, April, 1948.

<sup>3</sup> John Crosby, *New York Herald-Tribune*, June 29, 1950.

knew what the word "retroactive" meant. He walked up to an elevator starter and declared belligerently: "Listen, I think you ought to know that the last elevator on the right side is retroactive."

"Gee," said the starter, "I haven't heard any complaints from the elevator man."

"It's dangerous."

"Gee, we'll have to look into it. You think it's very dangerous?"

"It certainly is dangerous. You can get into all kinds of trouble with that."

Mr. Funt then wandered out, smiling his sadistic smile, and accosted a young lady at a soda fountain. "Boy," he exclaimed, "isn't this weather retroactive, though!" She agreed heartily that it was.

"Most retroactive day we've had," said Funt.

"Yes," said the girl, "Terrible."

"You know what retroactive weather is, don't you?" asked Funt.

"Very hot without stopping," said the girl firmly.

The next victim was a gentleman window shopping. "Hey, buddy," said Funt grimly, "if I were you I wouldn't go into that store."

"Why not?"

"Those people in there, they're very retroactive. . . . I mean if a store is retroactive, the least you can do is pass 'em by."

"Well," said the man uncertainly, "as long as you insist"

"I don't insist. It's just my advice. Would you—do you—ever go into stores that are retroactive?"

"Well, I've taken chances before."

#### USING THE RIGHT WORDS

It has been truly stated that words fire most of the bullets in the battle of public relations. To be effective, words must

describe the things they name and the actions they represent. The big problem is to capture the spirit of the learning situation and to communicate ideas in the language of appeal to the general public. In this way schools can break the bonds of isolation.

Educators might follow the lead of the U.S. Civil Service Commission and launch a war on gobbledegook. The purpose of the campaign, according to its chairman, was to make what was said understandable to everyone. This meant cutting out long-winded words and phrases that previously had resulted in confusion. It was found that one 83-word job-description sentence could be boiled down to about a dozen words easy to comprehend.

During the Second World War certain businessmen were expected to understand such bewildering directives as the following, issued by the Office of Price Administration:

The new pricing system correlates the pricing of fresh cucumber pickles by processors with the method used in figuring processor ceiling prices for pickles made by cucumbers that are first cured in salt brine.

Until a processor of fresh cucumber pickles determines the weighted average price per dozen containers F.O.B. factory, which he charged for the same item during the first 60 days after the beginning of the 1941 pack. To that he adds 8 percent to cover cost increases other than for cucumbers and increase for fresh cucumber costs at the rate of 40 cents per bushel.

Often similar types of complicated expressions are found in school messages designed for public consumption. Readers and listeners lose confidence in an author or speaker when his words do not make sense to them.

An enterprising young man from a large university, recently appointed school superintendent in a small Maine

city, made his initial address before a mixed audience of citizens. He wanted to impress the people with his professional competence and chose for his topic "The Whole Child." Throughout the speech he referred frequently to the "whole child" in a manner commonly understood among educators. Completing his address in what he thought was a blaze of glory, the superintendent urged members of the audience to ask questions. Finally, a timid woman arose and said, "Mr. ——, you have used the words 'whole child' again and again. What other kind of child is there?"

In another part of the country a rural supervisor hoped to improve school procedure by an extensive program of curriculum revision, utilizing the various resources in the community. At one of the planning sessions the supervisor stressed the value of "implementing" the program. She became embarrassed when it developed that some of the rural folk in attendance thought "implement" meant some sort of farm machinery!

Many other illustrations of public misunderstanding come to mind. The secondary-school teacher who spoke glibly of "internalization," which students thought had something to do with digestion. The parent who asked his elementary-school child what he had learned in arithmetic. The child showed a blank expression. Fortunately, before engaging in public condemnation of the schools, the parent visited the teacher and learned that arithmetic was taught as "number skills." Teachers and administrators must be sure the specific public understands when such terms are spoken or written as "language arts," "school-community setting," "frame of reference," "behavior pattern," and others.

The U.S. Weather Bureau came down to earth in a report that precipitated a five-column headline in a New

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York newspaper,<sup>4</sup> entitled OH, BOY—WEATHER MAN'S TALKING OUR LANGUAGE:

The renaissance in weather forecasting was explained by agent Ernest J. Christine as "trying as we go along to phrase the forecast in such a way as to give a clear and accurate picture of what the weather is going to be. We believe that a word here and there will make the forecast a more usable piece of information. Instead of saying that the weather will be 'fair and warmer,' it sometimes gives a better picture to say, 'the day will be bright with pleasant temperature.'"

Elbert Hubbard once said, "Let men express themselves in their own way, and if they express themselves poorly, their punishment will be that no one will read them." He recognized the essential value of translating ideas into such a vivid language picture that none can fail to see. The appeal should be to the common denominator of mass interest; ideas should be focused sharply on reader interest.

Here is a significant news story of what happened in a New York City school because of a teachers' salary protest:

### HOW STOPPAGE AFFECTS PUPILS IN ONE SCHOOL

Stoppage of after-school activities may be just a lot of words to you unless you happen to be a high school student. Here is what the teachers' salary protest has done to the boys and girls in one school . . . in the Bronx:

Bus trip to West Point scheduled for seniors, called off. Ditto for a boat ride scheduled for June 13. No senior prom; no junior prom. No faculty-student baseball game. No free trips to the Yankee Stadium. No baseball, track and other sports. Annual operetta scheduled for May 18, 19, 20, cancelled though costumes and scenery have been bought and rehearsals held.

<sup>4</sup> *New York World-Telegram and The Sun*, Feb. 16, 1950.

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"This sets the high schools back 50 years," commented Miss \_\_\_\_, President of the High School Teachers Association. She said the situation at \_\_\_\_ High School is typical of what has happened throughout the city.

### USING SEVERAL MEDIA

Reaching the public is an endless process. The interests of many different kinds of Americans must be attracted. All communication channels, therefore, must be kept humming to reach people of different ages, varying income, and numerous levels of educational experience. Newspapers, radio, television, magazines, talks, word of mouth, displays, letters, pictures, demonstrations—in short, every possible way must be utilized to acquaint the public with prompt, adequate, and truthful information.

The Seattle, Washington, public schools send bulletins to parents describing methods of instruction. One such bulletin dealt with arithmetic and accompanied the report card sent to each parent. Work on the bulletin combined the resources of the curriculum committee, the mathematics department, and individual teachers, all of whom made every effort to avoid theoretical expressions and pedagogical verbiage. The results were excellent reception by parents and increased teacher-pupil interest in arithmetic. This bulletin followed the question-and-answer technique. Both questions and answers were brief and to the point. For example, "When does your child begin to learn arithmetic?" "The use of arithmetic begins in the home when your child knows how old he is; when he can tell coins apart. . . ." Another pointed question read, "Can parents help?" The obvious answer is, "Yes, they can if they know what the schools are trying to do."

Remember that each medium has its appeal and its use.

Not a single technique can be overlooked in conveying the facts. Every potential friend has to be supplied with all the evidence he needs to form definite and intelligent ideas about the values of education.

The Baltimore Public Relations Workshop serves as a good example. In an effort to develop basic concepts of good school-community relations, Baltimore was one of the first to set up a public-relations workshop. The members of this voluntary workshop—teachers, principals, supervisors, directors, and assistant directors from every division and department—attempted a realistic appraisal of public relations in the Baltimore schools. The group reviewed the publication program, parent-teacher relationships as a facet of public relations, adult-education community councils, vocational-education advisory councils, and community-study programs.

In addition, they considered school-centered activities, including open-house conferences with parents, exhibits, and student publications. They reviewed community campaigns, Junior Red Cross and Youth Board programs, Department of Recreation activities held in public schools, and the work of the Coordinating Council of parent organizations. Attention was given to the values and limitations of lay participation in policy formation and in curriculum development.

With a newspaper going into every home, there is no excuse for misunderstanding the high aims and purposes of the educational program. Newspapers reach more people more often than any other single medium. Newspapers can be referred to again and again; they can be passed from one person to another. The home-town paper reaches the hearts of many citizens.

Of course there must exist better than a passing knowl-

edge of the publicity story. The teacher must be able to judge whether a story merits coverage, in addition to knowing the values of correct timing, reliability, high standards of correctness, and ingenuity in developing ideas. The schools must encourage a publicity-conscious organization and a closer and more cooperative press relationship.

It should be noted that the radio finds a place in 95 per cent of American homes. Consider too the exciting medium of television that reproduces and transmits the sight and sound of whole events. Television has developed with explosive speed, opening a valuable new route to the public. Yet in the search for ways to reach a wider audience, one should not forget for a moment that the teacher, the pupil, and the parent make up the advance guard.

#### TEACHERS, A PRIMARY FACTOR

The impression that teachers make on various people often reflects the impression that the program makes on them. This impression may constitute a truly representative picture of the program or a distinctly biased one. Thus the teachers--their personal conduct, their actions and attitudes, and their technical efficiency--are primary factors in reaching the public.

Gray observes that "the school's business is to give pupils what parents want them to have and to guide parents to want the right things for their children. The school then must educate not only the pupils but the parents."<sup>6</sup>

As an example of the truth of this statement, the New York City school system discarded its old form of annual report and replaced it with five separate booklets, each out-

<sup>6</sup> Miriam Gray, *Physical Education Demonstration*, A. S. Barnes and Company, New York, copyright, 1947.

lining in detail what the schools are doing with reference to five major educational areas. These are *Teaching the Fundamental Skills, Building and Maintaining Our Schools, Adult Education, School and Community Cooperation, and Training and Developing the Professional Staff.*

In telling their story the new way, the schools present a comprehensive picture of what is being done in each area. Within a span of three or four years, the reports cover all the major areas defined by the school authorities.

Sound reasons exist for the change in annual report. A complete report of the schools activities would result in a book too large for the people to read.

It follows, then, that the teacher's efforts should be directed to educate, interpret, lead, and please other people in his relations with them. By so doing, it becomes possible to elicit friendliness and good will. The ability to get along with people is a principal ingredient.

#### BE HUMAN

The selling job is not accomplished by rash criticism, not by bragging and blustering, not by self-recommendation. It is accomplished by being genuinely interested in other persons, by appearance, by deportment, and by personality.

Beckley proposes seven admirable and helpful steps about getting along with people.<sup>6</sup> They are:

1. Practice self-control.
2. Appreciate and praise where deserved.
3. Stress rewards.
4. Criticize tactfully
5. Always listen.
6. Explain thoroughly.
7. Consider the person's interest.

<sup>6</sup> John L. Beckley, *Let's Be Human*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., New York, copyright, 1947, p. 13.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

*The public must observe in the teacher's speech and actions the ideals and practices of the program he represents. Many programs have been accepted and supported on the basis of the teacher's relations with people—how he gets along with them and the mutual respect that exists between them. The success of the program is dubious if the instructor is lazy, unusually timid, or abnormally modest.*

A long time ago Publius Syrius, the Roman poet, said, "We are interested in others when they are interested in us." Teachers should go to the public more often with educational problems and ask the public to share the responsibility for instructional policies and programs. People need to feel important; a person left out in the cold does not become very enthusiastic about helping with community affairs.

### **STUDENTS, THE CONNECTING LINK**

Such exclamations as the following are not uncommon in the average household: "Why should we spend all that extra money just for music and art at school? Jack Smith's mother says music and art are just a waste of time."

How does Jack's mother know about these things? From Jack, of course, who is disgruntled with the instruction he receives at school. A mother usually believes what her child tells her about the school.

If Jack had enjoyed his lessons in music and art, he would have been eager to talk enthusiastically about them at school, at home, and in the community. Moreover, he would show the results of art and music education in his play and recreation, in his social attitudes, and in his school-work.

The education program must be sound, and it must be taught with competence and understanding if participants

are to interpret the program correctly. The school has its widest and most constant association with pupils. They are the connecting trunk line between the schools and the public.

#### PARENTS WANT TO UNDERSTAND

Parents, as a public, can be reached by mail, by demonstrations, by talks, by participation in curriculum planning, and by all the other media used to influence other groups in the community. Some schools do remarkably well with their interpretative crusade of reports and pamphlets. Sample titles for such documents are *The Newsletter*, *Handbook for Parents*, *The Kindergarten and Your Child*, *Manhasset Schools in Action*, *Planning Better Schools for Perry County*, and *A Report from Your School*.

Information and interpretation bring understanding and awareness, and these in turn lead to an appreciation of the task at hand and a sympathetic recognition of what is involved in accomplishing the task.

A knowledge of how children grow and develop is sought by most parents; they are more likely to endorse and support what they know and understand. One might say that good relations with parents and pupils are developed through interpretation, through the creation of awareness, and through the encouragement of participation.

As an illustration, techniques used effectively to gain pupil and public support for reading include book fairs conducted by children with the help of teachers and bookstores; individual teacher-parent conferences with discussions of reading purposes, materials, and skills; sessions held where parents of pupils in one classroom meet with the teacher and are briefed on the relation of reading to other subjects in the curriculum; letters mailed to parents that

describe reading readiness and other requirements; school and community newspapers used to publicize the reading program, board-of-education publications containing articles on reading clinics and instruction; and parent-teacher-association meetings where authorities on good books for children address the assembly. In the above examples, let it be understood that intercommunication is essential between the schools, pupils, and public. Parents especially can provide a great stimulus to the schools, and parental views must be heard, analyzed, and put to appropriate use.

#### **LETTERS**

Letters make friends, too. Next to actual contact, correspondence is the best public-relations medium. Letters are personal, they make an indelible impression and represent an excellent means of selling the true character of the schools.

Big-name business firms recognize the importance of letter writing as a way of reaching the public. One correspondence consultant (a specialist who writes business letters for other people) services 21 business institutions with some 7,000 guide letters which produce over 45 million planned letters a year.

Big corporations have learned that it pays to be friendly and that letters help to maintain good will. Everyone appreciates being treated frankly, fairly, and with consideration in a letter. Good public relations often means the difference between profit and loss to large corporations.

The use of correspondence is appropriate in many school experiences and situations. Teachers can dispatch letters of information, explanation, commendation, appreciation and congratulation; they can send health reports, progress reports, and thank-you notes—to name just a few forms of

## THE PUBLIC AND HOW IT CAN BE REACHED

correspondence. The following letter, both invitational and explanatory in nature, illustrates how correspondence can be utilized to interpret a school program for parents:

Dear Parent:

The \_\_\_\_\_ Public School System will present its third annual exhibition of work in Central High School on Thursday evening, May 17th, at 8:00 P.M.

This year's exhibition will include:

1. Examples of work from all our schools in reading, arithmetic, spelling, social studies, and science.
2. Demonstrations of industrial arts, music, art, and physical education—with your children in one or more of the groups.
3. Exhibits which show the cost of each subject in pupil hours.
4. Plans for our two new school buildings; the architect and contractor will assist school personnel in discussing problems with parents.

We are confident that you will be proud of your children and of our schools, as you observe evidences of the work done. So why not reserve Thursday evening, May 17th, and join us at the exhibition?

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

### LETTER-WRITING FORMULA

A correspondence consultant presents simplified rules for use in writing letters, known as "Morris's Five Rules for Letter Writing." They are:<sup>7</sup>

1. *Adopt a "you" attitude.* Write in terms of your reader's wishes and needs.
2. *Be courteous.* Tact and graciousness pay off—even in letters.

<sup>7</sup> Richard H. Morris, *This Week*, New York Herald-Tribune, July 30, 1950.

3. *Be sincere.* Answer without evasion or alibis. Say nothing that can't be backed by facts. Say nothing that can be misconstrued.
4. *Be enthusiastic.* Don't sound like a page from last year's almanac. Don't sound as though you're in a hurry or doing your reader a favor by answering him.
5. *Be natural.* You wouldn't tell a man, "Please be advised. . ." Why write it? Stereotyped language is a bore and seldom brings results. Pretend you're reading your letters aloud to your correspondent.

A helpful aid and timesaver is the use of a technique called "guide letters" developed by large concerns. Guide letters are written to fit all generally recurring situations. Guide letters are not form letters but basic patterns which can be varied to fit individual cases.

#### A CONCLUDING SUGGESTION

To point out each of the countless ways of reaching the public would be an endless task. Every act, word, and situation makes its contribution, and the little things—such as how the telephone is answered—are important in reaching the worthwhile goal of informing and pleasing the public. In each contact good will must be gained. Only by identifying himself with the community and by co-operating with other publics can the best possible relations be attained by the teacher to gain unfailing support for the program he represents. The following words contain a pertinent bit of advice:<sup>8</sup>

Remember that every communication will take at least two persons' time—that of the speaker or the writer and that of the audience even though it may be only an audience of

<sup>8</sup> Argus Tresidder, Leland Schubert, and Charles W. Jones, *Writing and Speaking*, The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1943.

one. It isn't enough for the expression of the ideas to be what the speaker wants. . . . The audience must have what it wants, too: to be informed, persuaded, moved to thought or action, entertained, or guided. If the speaker wastes the audience's time once, he will seldom get a second chance, almost never a third.

**SUMMARY**

There exist hundreds of different publics, each bound together by some common interest.

Since publics overlap, an individual may belong to many publics.

The nature and desires of each of the many publics must be determined so that communication media can do their work effectively.

Education must reach all the publics through every available medium.

Simplicity and understandable expression are needed to reach more publics.

Teachers are a primary factor in reaching the public. They must lead, interpret, and please other people at each point of contact.

Students are the connecting links to the public and must be taught with clarity and understanding so that they can interpret the school to parents and other adults.

Parents will support and endorse what they know, understand, and believe in.

Letters make friends and help to maintain good will.

Five simplified rules for letter writing are: (1) adopt a "you" attitude, (2) be courteous, (3) be sincere, (4) be enthusiastic, and (5) be natural.

Every act, word, and situation makes its contributions toward the worthwhile end of informing the public.

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### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In order to reach the public, it is first necessary to interest the public. Every person has certain definite likes and dislikes which, when appealed to, bring forth definite responses. List aspects of the school program of greatest interest to you that might attract the favorable attention of people.
2. Select a given community and describe the group that might include the "high-brows," the "low-brows." What characteristics have these two groups in common? What school activities in this community would appeal to the interest of both groups? What activities would have greatest appeal to each group?
3. What is meant by the statement "a specialized interest group constitutes a public"? What specialized interest groups do you find in the community described above?
4. Discuss the relative advantages in public relations of (a) "face-to-face relations" and (b) "publicity."
5. Make two columns of words or phrases about simplicity in public relations: one column to symbolize what simplicity is, the other column to tell what simplicity is not. Then select a school activity or experience and describe how it might be brought to a given public in simple terms.
7. Prepare a letter to parents announcing a selected school activity containing the elements portrayed in the "letter-writing formula."

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Abraham Lincoln once said, "With public opinion on its side, everything succeeds; with public opinion against it, nothing succeeds."<sup>1</sup>

## *Publicity*

## SIX

Many persons expect publicity to produce spectacular results. It rarely does. The dividends never can be counted by how many lines get into a newspaper or by the number of speeches made. The long-range view is the accurate one. Public understanding and support come from the *continued efforts* of telling the story. There has to be a planned presentation of a point of view. Good and bad publicity stories abound in the average school. It is up to the schools to guide them.

Often it is difficult to convince teachers that publicity can be legitimate and responsible—without sham or deceit. Too often, publicity is confused with press agentry devoid of substance or with propaganda which fabricates or twists truths in such a way as to inhibit rational thinking. Sound publicity comprises the elements of importance, timeliness, interest and *truth*.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from Edward L. Bernays, *Public Relations*, p. 183, copyright 1952, by the University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Okla. Reprinted by kind permission of the publisher.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

### **PUBLICITY DEFINED**

There are a hundred ways of defining publicity, but basically it is nothing more than information with news value, designed to advance the interests of a place, a person, a cause, or an institution. It involves placing information before the public through such established channels as the newspaper, exhibit, conference, address, radio, television, demonstration, and exhibition. Whereas public relations represents all the dealings of teachers with the public, publicity constitutes an organized and deliberate effort to enlist support by doing something and telling others about it. Publicity involves any matter—spoken, written, printed, demonstrated, or shown—which secures public attention.

Most persons consider publicity as an indirect way of building good will through providing interesting information. It means finding or creating or interpreting news—not just printing something that somebody wants printed. If the story is to break into print, it must compete with every other news story in the paper. It must interest a large number of readers. Publicity is the modern method of securing community interest and support. A publicity-conscious teacher can "sell" his product through interesting information if it has the elements of news.

### **PUBLICITY FOR INTERPRETATION**

A well-planned and well-executed continuous program of publicity can interpret readily the significant aspects of education in such a way that the public understands how education benefits the people in a community. Publicity—which combines good conduct and honest reporting—cannot substitute for a poor program. *Quality cannot be promoted into a program.*

The basic function of publicity is to furnish truthful information. Fair play, correct timing, reliability, and high standards of accuracy and ingenuity in developing ideas are some of the essential details. Sound publicity never can whitewash abuses in policy or action. As Emerson wrote a long time ago, "Use what language you will, you can never say anything but what you are."

On the other hand, to say that a good teaching program is the best type of publicity may represent only a dangerous half truth. Teachers and other school personnel have the equal responsibility of translating accomplishments into words that hearers, viewers, and readers understand.

Finding stories should not be too difficult for teachers. They have something worthwhile to sell—the program, the profession, themselves, and, most important of all, the services they perform. The public accepted nylon as a new and superior fabric; it approved of frozen foods because of their freshness in taste. In much the same way, education cannot miss if teachers continually associate it with service.

#### THE WRONG SLANT

In the past, some educators have been guilty of trying to ram stories down people's throats. When this failed, newspapers and other media often were blamed for a lack of understanding of things that count in a school system. For years leading public-relations experts in education have denounced the amount of space devoted to subjects incidental to real achievement.

On the other hand, in the earlier days of school publicity some educators held to the belief that they knew better than the editors what people wanted to know about the schools. So the editors do not know what interests readers!

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That is plain silly. The public knows what it wants; and newspapers supply these wants and do an excellent job of it.

It may be well to consider *exactly* what goes into the making of successful publicity.

### THE NEWS STORY

The most effective medium of publicity is the news story. Readers are readily influenced by what appears in the news columns because ostensibly such stories are unbiased. News is something which interests many people. The standards by which the reader judges it refer not to where it came from but to how significant the news is to him. The more readers it interests, the better the story. News must attract attention, and to attract attention it must have reader appeal.

The first necessary step is to recognize the elements that comprise a news story. Bleyer says, "News is anything timely that interests a number of people, and the best news is that which has the greatest interest for the greater number."

In simpler terms, news is timely and accurate information which interests the public; it consists of facts. The following measuring sticks determine whether or not an item constitutes news: timeliness or newness, significance or progress, human interest, conflict or suspense, unusualness or unexpectedness, novelty or drama, and, of course, name appeal of outstanding persons.

### RECOGNIZING NEWS

Any item can be tested by these simple questions: (1) Is the information important, timely, and true? (2) Will the story appeal to many people? (3) Will the facts be

\* Willard Grosvenor Bleyer, *Newspaper Writing and Editing*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1932, p. 30

accepted as interesting? (4) Does it have significance for many people? (5) Can more significance and interest be created without exaggeration or alteration of facts? (6) If the item itself is not newsworthy, can some angle of it be developed or some points brought out to qualify it as news?

The best guide, however, is the newspaper itself. The type of stories which appear daily are selected with great care by the editor whose job depends upon choosing the most interesting and vital happenings of the day. He looks, first of all, for anything with a local angle, because he knows that a person is concerned with his family, his friends, his neighborhood, or his community. Anything that happens to a local person has news value. Schools are filled with youngsters, and each one of them has a name. Readily acceptable are stories of pupil accomplishments, honor rolls, graduations, alumni achievements, graduates entering college, new teachers, speeches, and names of participants in activities.

#### THE ODDITY MAKES NEWS

The editor also realizes that human beings are curious about anything new. Curiosity is part of the makeup of everyone. The informed person evidenced no surprise when the following story from Harvard University made several of the nation's leading papers:<sup>3</sup>

#### HARVARD TEACHES PIGEONS LEARNS FROM THEM

Cambridge, Mass., June 13.—Pigeons that play ball are helping a Harvard psychologist determine whether reward or punishment is more effective in teaching. The pouters have been taught these tricks in experiments performed by Dr. B. F. Skinner, professor of psychology, and made public by

<sup>3</sup> *New York Herald-Tribune*, June 14, 1950

Harvard University today. They may ultimately help to show whether a child's behavior can be improved with candy or with spankings. . . .

Also of interest would be local stories of curriculum changes, new equipment, new classroom projects, and new activities of various kinds. Although commonplace to teachers and students, these events may have an appeal of newness to many persons in the community.

The element of surprise also figures in news stories. The moment a person acts in a way that other human beings consider unusual, he begins to make news. The fact that Americans spend 21 billion dollars annually for commercial recreation was utilized by a reporter who called attention to the fact that educators give little thought to teaching people how to use their spare time. Numerous opportunities arise in modern languages to instill public interest both within and outside the school. Language clubs encourage individual members in language growth. Programs presented by the club at school assemblies help to publicize the work of modern-language classes. Such a program must have audience appeal that combines entertainment and educational values. A short skit in a foreign language preceded by an explanation in English, a journey by films or slides, these and other techniques are possible means of publicizing the work of language groups. Competent students may offer to translate letters received by citizens from families living in foreign countries who have benefited by aid sent through one of the American relief organizations.

Interesting news stories appear, as if by magic, in many school areas. An alert teacher of senior mathematics in a high school, for example, sensed that readers would be surprised at the number of students who paid an income

tax and even more surprised to learn that the high school helped students to file accurate returns as a part of its mathematics instruction. The headline read:

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TAXPAYERS  
INCOME TAX RETURNS IN  
HIGH SCHOOL MATH CLASS

**THE CONSEQUENCE STORY**

Readers also are vitally interested in consequences and human desires—anything that helps them live better or that affects them personally. The schools contain a multitude of such potential events. Do remedial health defects retard pupil progress? Does watching television several hours each day interfere with normal growth and development? Will the contemplated new school building improve pupil achievement? Will the revised curriculum in citizenship reduce juvenile delinquency? Does the school-lunch program actually improve child nutrition, or do parents merely give children less to eat at home? The consequences of school procedures, either actual or contemplated, suggest scores of news items which educators might use to advantage in molding public opinion.

**CONFLICT STORIES**

Conflict has more than a passing appeal for many. The ingredients are competition and struggle—the impact of ideas, events, and situations as they result in the struggle between individuals, between groups, between man and nature. The problem of new educational concepts vying with the old became an appealing news item, as evidenced by the following example:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Helen T. Emery, *New York World-Telegram and The Sun*, Aug. 31, 1950.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

### PARENTS OF 1-A PUPILS LEARN ABOUT LEARNING

If your little Johnny or Mary is going to school for the first time this fall, there are a few things you, dear parent, ought to know about child psychology. And the first of these is that no two children learn at the same pace.

Don't be disappointed if Johnny doesn't learn as rapidly as Tommy down the street. And above all, don't scold Johnny because he proceeds at a slower pace.

This is one bit of advice which Superintendent of Schools William Jansen offers in a four-page booklet he has prepared for distribution to the parents of newly enrolled first-graders. . . .

### HUMAN INTEREST

All-inclusive interest stories involve the full impact of ideas, events, and situations as they affect individuals—particularly children. Present are the elements of love, hate, fear, desire, pride, pity, and anger.

A little girl walks across a vacant lot. The covering of a deep well caves in, and the youngster disappears in the depth and darkness. An entire nation awaits the outcome—will she be found dead or alive? Commenting on this type of interest, an editorial read.

Human beings continued to die of heart disease in the United States at the rate of nearly a million a year. Thousands in India and China dropped in their tracks of starvation. The two most powerful countries in the world talked in terms of war.

But suddenly the most important thing to 140,000,000 Americans was whether 3-year-old Kathy Fiscus—a cute kid with a ribbon in her hair—would ever play with her dolls again. Every household in the country was involved in

\* *New York World-Telegram and The Sun*, Apr. 11, 1949.

Kathy's fate. Parents who had never heard of San Marino sat with Kathy's mother and father in that car in the vacant lot and helped them to pray. Men worked around the clock to dig a hole from which they could reach her. They used an expensive well-digging rig that usually earns its owners \$500 an hour. But nobody had thought about who would pay the bill; it was just that there was a little girl down a well, alone and hurt and frightened, and she had to be saved if it could be done. All of a sudden in a country which loves to turn a profit, money didn't matter anymore. Something like Kathy Fiscus had happened to America once before, when Floyd Collins was trapped in a Kentucky cave. For days the story of the attempts to rescue him was on the front pages of every newspaper in the country. All America heard Floyd Collins crying weakly for release from his prison, and all America prayed that his cries would be answered. He was never rescued. Nor did Kathy live.

What is so important in the cases of both Floyd Collins and Kathy Fiscus, however, is the capacity Americans have for sympathy and generosity and unselfishness when confronted with tragedy in its most personalized form. Humanity, which has had little to recommend it in recent centuries, looks very good when a little girl falls into a well.

#### THE INTERVIEW

Pertinent comments, expression of viewpoints, explanations of programs find a ready medium in the interview type of story. Everyone in the community is interested in what a teacher has to say, what he thinks, and what activities are included in his program.

How many would have felt, as one teacher did, the necessity for clarifying some of the issues in a community-wide difference over salary increases for teachers? This teacher was quoted:

Let me say at the outset that every teacher I know is in teaching by choice; we like youngsters, we want to work with them, or we would not have chosen teaching for careers. As some of our critics say, some of us would stay in the classroom if we were paid less than we are.

But a decent wage has a good effect on the total job any worker does, including professional persons like teachers. We don't begrudge any plumber, electrician, lawyer or doctor the wages or fees he is paid. Neither do we think that any one of these fields of employment compares favorably with teaching. There is no other job which requires the direction, control, and leadership of from 30 to 40 children in so important a function as education—and we know it. We also know that many of you in \_\_\_\_\_ don't know exactly what we do or how we do it. I know I speak for every teacher when I invite you to observe a school in action. We hope you can stay for the morning or afternoon session, but at least come in for an hour. Then you tell us whether our salary requests are unreasonable. One other thing. I know I'm no politician, and most of my fellow teachers aren't either. We know it takes mountains of information to understand the political aspects of any given issue, including teachers' salaries. And we agree with Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ when he says that teachers' salaries should not be made a matter of politics. Our salaries ought to be based on our competence and the jobs we do. On this basis and this basis alone we ask for salary increases.

Needless to say, the impact of an interview of this type is strong, and even in the heat of controversy such an interview reflects a desire to have the work of the school and of teachers brought to public attention.

Observe the merit of the following excerpts from two interviews. The first teacher quoted had just returned from a year's work as an exchange teacher:

We don't have so many subjects and activities in our high school as in \_\_\_\_\_. More of our students plan to attend college, while the bulk of students in \_\_\_\_\_ go into industry or fruit farming.

I didn't notice too much difference in the stress on skills or drill in my own subject, English. There's a great difference, though, in reading. We require many more classics than they do. I had to do a lot of reading to keep up with the many sources and current-interest areas in their English program. I'm not sure the boys and girls in \_\_\_\_\_ don't miss something; of course they read the literature about their own part of country and about their own vocational choices.

Another teacher had this to say:<sup>6</sup>

Every boy and girl should have trees to climb, tools to work with and even dirt and water in which to play. We don't do badly with our sand boxes and our shop rooms, and our miniature houses which the children can call trees, hills, trains, airplanes, ships or whatever they like. Our final aim is to develop the social, physical and intellectual attitudes which will make cooperative members of this complex society and we succeed pretty well. . . .

#### THE TIE-IN STORY

Almost every day items of interest appear in newspapers or magazines which pave the way for the teacher to follow them up with stories of contrast, comparison, approval, or disapproval. In the process of so doing, he has the opportunity to interpret or explain the educational program of the school. For example, a noted press service carried a story over its wires, quoting a leading educator who condemned the stress on athletics in schools and colleges. The

William L. Stephenson, director of the Boardman School, New York City, in an interview by Delos Lovelace, *New York World-Telegram and The Sun*, Apr. 26, 1950.

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

story complained that the spirit of the game had been kidnaped from players as a sacrifice to victory and in the interests of financial greed. The story continued with the usual condemnation of undesirable practices which place the desire to win ahead of worthwhile objectives inherent in athletic programs wisely conducted.

One physical-education teacher closely followed up the story outlined above with a story for the local paper calling attention to the carry-over sports being taught in the school program. He embraced the opportunity to explain that "carry-over" meant that the student would be able to play certain games with skill and profit in later life-long after he had left school.

Of course, many schools hid their heads in the sand. What else could they do? Many others, although not guilty, did not make the effort to correct a misconception that all school athletics are overemphasized and that the physical-education program, supported by taxpayers, was an athletic program existing only to make money for athletic trips.

Another tie-in story relating to history and service might have grown out of an item carried in a Western newspaper about schoolmarms finding the building cold and unlighted one brisk morning because the town fathers had failed to pay the light bill. An enterprising teacher or principal might have encouraged a reporter to interview one or more older persons in the community who taught school years ago when wood-burning stoves partially heated the room and there was no artificial light of any kind. In those winter days the room thermometer hovered around zero nearly *every* morning, while the teacher hurriedly built a fire as she tried to comfort children with frostbitten ears and tingling fingers. A comparison of the past and present would have made a

fascinating story about improvements in service and education within a generation or two.

#### NEWSPAPERS INFLUENCE MANY

Before considering some of the other media of publicity, it may be well to emphasize that a newspaper is one of the greatest educational influences in the United States. Certainly there must be at least partial agreement with this judgment. And yet some teachers resent the restless, sensation-hungry, unthinking reader as a symbol of a decaying civilization. Throwing up their hands, they say, "What's the use? What have we to offer in the way of publicity that can compete with the more lurid stories of the day? Just how do we go about it?"

The newspaper, which seems to be a more or less neglected medium, will be dissected and studied first. This by no means implies that newspapers represent the most vital or most direct line to the public. It does mean that newspapers constitute the most untapped possibility for sound and important publicity in education.

The next two chapters explain precisely how to write and present publicity stories. It really is not a difficult matter at all—the job of converting into terms of human comprehension and interest educational news of primary significance to the lives of people everywhere. The chapter which follows makes use of this excellent advice:<sup>7</sup>

Never mind writing what the public wants or what you suppose the public wants. Study your audience and then write what you want to say in the form that is most likely to appeal to them.

<sup>7</sup> Rudolf Flesch, *The Art of Readable Writing*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1949, p. 19.

The interest level of newspaper readers may be low. But keep in mind that newspaper stories mold the minds of millions, influencing people in what they do, what they think, and what they buy. Political aspirants use newspapers to seek power, organizations to raise money, big business to sell goods. Newspapers influence people to vote Republican or Democrat, to support or criticize the schools and programs of instruction. Newspapers help to establish an understanding among people and groups and to stimulate action—to approve or disapprove.

#### SUMMARY

Publicity is not to be confused with press agency devoid of substance or with propaganda which fabricates or twists truths in such a way as to inhibit rational thinking.

Publicity is an indirect way of building good will by providing interesting information.

Quality cannot be promoted into a program by publicity attempts alone.

The news story is one effective media of publicity because readers are readily influenced by what appears in the news columns.

News consists of interesting and timely facts.

A newspaper is a sound guide to the recognition of news.

Types of stories that are interesting include oddity, consequence, conflict, human interest, the interview, and the tie-in.

Public understanding and support come from a continued program of publicity.

Newspapers mold the thinking of millions, influencing people in what they do, what they think, and what they buy.

**QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Should people be given the news they need or the news they want? Explain your answer.
2. What information about education will interest a great number of people? Why?
3. How is it possible to discover human-interest stories in a program of instruction? Illustrate.
4. Study the daily paper and select the items of news interest on which you might write an education story.
5. Do you agree with the statement that "publicity is not measured by how many lines you get into a newspaper"?
6. Some persons contend that since a doctor is not expected to use publicity stories in his work, a teacher should not be expected to do so. Explain your reaction to this statement.

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**Begin with the heart of the subject without elaborate introduction. Stop when the story is told. Avoid obvious moral statements or implications.**

## *Writing and Placing Publicity Stories*

**SEVEN**

The best way to get publicity is to deserve it. Beyond this point the teacher must take the time and effort to learn the essential features of a news story. All newspapers require a distinctive and characteristic structure of the items they publish. If the story is significant enough, not only will the editor find someone to write it but in all probability he will send an experienced reporter to collect additional facts.

Usually, however, there just is not enough time to rewrite the minor items, and in a sense most school items are of minor importance to the average editor. Most papers are understaffed. Hundreds of well-written stories from all over the country pour in over the press wires ready for use. The wise editor, of course, prefers to print items of local interest, but expediency prompts him to relegate the poorly written story to the wastepaper basket. He has no other choice. He and his staff are just too busy.

**WHO IS TO WRITE THE STORY?**

Teachers are busy, too. A good job of teaching combined with other duties leaves little time for writing publicity items. This line of reasoning would be justifiable if a great deal of effort were needed. Actually, it may consume less time to prepare a publicity story in the proper fashion than to explain a likely news item to a reporter over the telephone. Realization of the vital need for school publicity suggests that time used for this purpose is well spent. Sooner or later it will bear fruit. It may be possible at times to enlist the help of students for the actual writing of articles. Many students welcome the opportunity and enjoy the experience of learning about public relations in this way.

If newspaper reporters do not have the time, and if teachers do not find the time, obviously a small amount of school news will reach the public through this important medium. This situation prevails in far too many communities. Actually news articles with reader appeal prepared according to accepted newspaper requirements are short cuts to getting the story before the public. Attacks against most school activities end in failure when the community is kept informed.

**THE NEWS-STORY FORM**

The climax of a news story comes first, followed by details and explanations in their order of interest and importance. The least interesting items come last. This is called the "inverted pyramid" outline. The first paragraph, called the "lead," presents the gist of the story in brief form. Usually the most interesting and challenging fact appears in the first sentence.

All that the author *expects* the newspaper to print comes

first, followed by all that he *hopes* will be printed—the expansion and elaboration of the lead and further amplifications and minor details which the editor may cut if he so desires. The lead should stand the test of being printed alone—removed from the rest of the story—and still make complete sense to the reader. The lead answers the time-honored questions of when, where, how, who, and why. For example: Formation of a student council (what) at East High School (where) to encourage more student participation in school activities (why) was announced yesterday (when) by Joseph Kerr, principal (who).

#### **WHY THE LEAD FORM?**

Reasons for the lead form are (1) to facilitate understanding by giving the hasty reader a review of facts contained in the story, (2) to satisfy curiosity by allowing the reader to decide whether he wants to read the story in its complete form, and (3) to facilitate writing the headline—usually done by the editor or copyreader.

#### **STYLE HINTS**

What usually follows the lead is more or less explanatory in nature. The lead continues with an elaboration by means of a series of paragraphs each relating to one aspect of the subject. Use short paragraphs. Emphasize unified paragraphs that deal with one topic or one idea and that stand alone, paragraphs that may be shifted within the story.

The news story is written with an impersonal, objective point of view, a view that presents facts and allows the reader to form his own opinion. Give special attention to accuracy with no preachments and with no misrepresentation. Always give the source of important information.

Literary writing for news stories proves less desirable

than the direct approach. The reader will have a better opportunity to grasp the news and its meaning if he reads it in simple and clear language. Writers should not insult the intelligence of their reading public, even though American newspapers are designed for people with limited understanding of the printed word. Avoid underwriting as zealously as overwriting.

Above all, use the fewest possible number of words. Do not ramble. Avoid sensational phrases and "eight-cylinder" words. Be stingy with adjectives and above all omit bromides or clichés. The more facts contained in the story, the more acceptable it will be. Use first names and last names and spell all names correctly.

#### SPEECH STORIES

Readers are interested in speeches because they may inform, influence, or entertain. Such stories often focus attention on controversial issues. Speech stories are used for talks, lectures, sermons, addresses, reports, resolutions, letters, official statements, and panel discussions. A speech or talk can produce at least three news stories: (1) the preliminary, or advance, (2) the speech report, and (3) the follow-up.

The purpose of the speech should be the feature of the preliminary, or advance notice and the purpose should be included in the lead sentence. Here are examples of both good and bad lead sentences. "The advisability of a municipal recreation commission will be discussed tonight at 7:30 P.M. at a meeting of the Board of Aldermen to be held at the town hall" (good). "The Board of Aldermen will hold a 7:30 P.M. meeting tonight at the town hall" (bad). Vague beginnings are bad, such as "There will be a meeting . . ." or "The first meeting of the year . . .".

Once the lead has been written, the remainder of the article follows the pattern of the news story. Be sure to identify the speaker and make clear the occasion for the speech, the exact time and place of the meeting, and the exact wording of the subject of the speech.

Educators might follow with profit the technique of coaches and sports people who prepare advance information by what are commonly known as "clip sheets" (advance publicity material). These clip sheets include pertinent information about the speaker, the background of the occasion, and the interpretative sidelights of the subject under discussion. Remember that an editor may understand news, but too frequently he does not know modern education or its terminology.

#### WHAT WAS SAID?

Writing a speech story is more difficult than writing the usual news piece. Although the same general outline is followed, one important difference arises. The lead paragraph of the speech story must include the *most important thing said by the speaker* in addition to the who, why, what, where, and when.

There are three ways to achieve this objective: (1) by the use of direct quotes (exact words of the speaker), (2) by indirect quotes, and (3) by summarizing or paraphrasing the speaker's ideas.

Emphasis is placed on what the speaker said rather than on the fact that someone gave a speech. Sometimes it is difficult to summarize a long speech in a form that will interest readers who did not attend the meeting, as well as those who heard the speaker.

Several types of lead styles are possible within the general pattern. The most common is the direct quotation of one

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

important sentence at the beginning of the lead, followed by the five w's. Example:

"Society has cheated boys and girls if they reach the middle teens without having learned basic civic obligations," declared John Smith, Mayor of Ferndale, in a talk on youth activities delivered yesterday at the Rotary Club. . . .

Another lead style is to quote an entire paragraph of the speech and give the five w's in a second paragraph. This technique is often used when the speech contains important statements that utilize more than one sentence. Example:

"There is a tremendous gap between the civic obligations faced by teen-age youth today, wherein democratic procedures give children greater opportunities to make their own decisions, and youth of a generation ago when children were expected to be 'seen and not heard.' Today, such opportunities impose obligations of responsibility on youth for decisions made. Their parents and grandparents did not have the same responsibility."

So declared Mayor John Smith, in a speech before the Rotary Club. . . . •

Another form of lead is the *keynote lead*. Here the speaker's message is summed up in a noun statement with modifiers. Example:

The need for learning basic civic obligations by teen-agers was emphasized by John Smith, Mayor of Ferndale, yesterday. . . .

The *summary, or paraphrase* form of reporting speeches provides an opportunity for variety and originality. Here the writer translates into his own words the main points made by the speaker. Example:

The difference between old and modern types of civic responsibility for youths is a big factor in preparing teen-

## WRITING AND PLACING PUBLICITY STORIES

agers for better living, according to Mayor John Smith who spoke yesterday. . . .

Sometimes the *quoted title* of the speech makes a good starting point. Example:

"Civic Responsibilities for teen-agers was the subject discussed by Mayor John Smith yesterday. . . .

Another effective lead is the *participle beginning*. Example:

Contending that teen-agers must assume greater civic responsibility, Mayor John Smith . . . urged members of the Rotary Club to get behind the school citizenship program. . . .

Certain types of leads should be avoided. These include such beginnings as "There was a meeting. . . ." "One of the most interesting. . . ." "The audience was thrilled . . ."

Once the lead has been written, the body of the story moves right along. The chronological order of the actual speech need not be followed. About two-thirds of the report may consist of direct quotes but they should be interspersed with appropriate summaries. Variety helps to hold reader interest.

### THE INTERVIEW

A speech report and an interview report are written in much the same way. All the techniques used in reporting a speech apply to the interview. The interview, however, presents exceptional possibilities for publicity exploration. Whereas a speech report relates only to what the speaker happened to say, the interview can be directed. Numerous ramifications of a given topic can be planned and investi-

gated beforehand. A teacher may even interview himself and write the story. Preferably, however, the teacher notifies an editor or reporter if a newsworthy event seems to justify an arranged interview.

There are three general types of interviews: (1) for facts, (2) for opinions, and (3) for personality study. Any school announcement can form the basis of an interview story. The best, however, are those closely related to the news of the day. The interview grows out of an event in which there is the possibility of a follow-up that emphasizes the event, disagrees with it, or localizes it. There is a timeliness, a news reason, for the interview. The lead may be written in this style:

"Guidance programs have passed the experimental stage and now constitute one of the bulwarks of American education," said John Smith, director of guidance at East High School, when asked his reaction to yesterday's AP statement of Professor John Boaster, who branded guidance a costly frill in modern education.

Group interviews often produce desirable results. The lead here should sum up adequately the news event under discussion. Example:

The long, neat lines of airmen lying on their backs and grunting in cadence are no more. From now on, physical fitness in the Air Force will be built around competitive sports.

Colonel John Moore says the change should help in building a more self-reliant Air Force.

That airmen welcome the change goes without saying. Sergeant Joseph Willis puts it this way: "The boys are tickled pink. . . ."

Captain Robert Franks, training officer, evaluated the new plan thus: "Competitive sports simulate combat conditions better than calisthenics; thus the new program of physical

## **WRITING AND PLACING PUBLICITY STORIES**

fitness in the Air Force becomes a distinct adjunct to the complete training program. . . . The give-and-take in competitive games tends to develop the physical and emotional stamina that characterizes the brave and alert men in the American armed forces."

### **COMMON MISTAKES**

The opening sentences of any type of newspaper story are the most exacting. Once they have been written, the rest of the story should flow smoothly, provided there are enough additional facts. In the absence of facts, there may be an inclination to pad the story with opinion, excessive adjectives, and shopworn personal clichés such as, "it is my belief," "in the writer's humble opinion," "glorified and intensified," "avowed and established purposes of the school," "educating the whole child," "in such situations," and others.

There is no substitute for facts. Opinions and editorializing usually represent a waste of time, because a good newspaper will not tolerate them in the news columns. The more facts gathered, the longer the story will be, and the better chance it has of gaining a prominent headline. Let those facts speak for themselves, and let the reader draw his own conclusion. Instead of "he is a well-qualified administrator," give his experience and the facts and let the reader pass judgment; instead of "an interesting demonstration of music appreciation was given," present the program and the facts and let the reader judge; instead of "he was angry," tell how he acted and let the reader decide.

### **BREVITY AND COMPLETENESS**

How long a story does the paper want? The length of the written account depends of course on the available facts. Brevity is desired, but completeness also is essential. As a

general rule, write what the story seems to need to make it complete. If the pyramid form is followed, the editor can trim it to a desired length. A couple of "oldies" often used as examples of brevity and completeness follow:

James C. \_\_\_\_\_ looked up the shaft of the Lincoln Building today to see if the elevator was coming down. It was. Age 33.

Mrs. Robert \_\_\_\_\_ was awarded a divorce decree from her husband on the grounds of mental cruelty and neglect. She testified that in all the years they had been married, he spoke to her only three times. She was awarded custody of their three children.

#### BROMIDES

In an effort to avoid elegant words, inexperienced writers often use worn-out phrases and trite expressions. They believe that a special slang language or pet phraseology is required. An examination of the better daily papers reveals that nothing is farther from the truth. Simplicity of expression is desired at all times, with a minimum of adjectives and with few if any superlatives. Forget the word "very" and show a preference for active verbs. Clearness, conciseness, and originality of expression should be cultivated. Try to avoid the following bromides:

worked like a Trojan	gala attire
all too soon	complete the scene
like a rock	breakneck speed
believe it or not	cool as a cucumber
light fantastic	few well-chosen words
come through in the clutch	hotly contested
popular citizen	received an ovation
foregone conclusion	to the bitter end
large and enthusiastic	appropriate experiences
audience	untiring effort

snake-hipped his way	city fathers
undercurrent of excitement	do justice to
bids fair to become	burning issue
acid test of time	doomed to disappointment

**FOR RADIO**

It will be worth the effort if every story planned for newspaper release is also rewritten for radio. Certain differences in style are to be noted. In the newspaper lead, the facts are given first and then the authority. Radio gives the authority and *then* the facts. An example of a newspaper lead is the following:

Electronics will be included as an elective offering in the high-school program, it was announced today by John Smith. . . .

The following is typical of a radio lead:

John Smith, principal of East High School, announced the addition of a new course starting with the fall term. A course in electronics will be introduced. . . .

Six general guiding principles should be observed in writing news items for radio: (1) be brief but tell the story; (2) strive for a clear, familiar, and conversational style; (3) use action-packed verbs for clarity and power instead of passive verbs; (4) avoid relative and qualifying clauses, (5) select crisp, short, direct, and easy words and sentences; and (6) adjectives, frowned upon in newspaper copy, are welcomed in radio.

**FILLERS**

One or two sentences of general information about the subject program—science, guidance, music, recreation—will prove invaluable to the reporter or broadcaster. Twenty or

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

thirty of these sentences may be submitted; they will find their way into print or come over the air, one at a time, as they are needed. Examples:

In Canada, badminton leads as an indoor sport; the game had its origin in India.

Bowling as we know it today is a typical American sport, although it developed from bowling on the green, which originated long ago in the British Isles.

Twenty-one different activities are conducted at East High School that point toward a better use of leisure time.

Lacrosse is the oldest native American game; it was played originally by the American Indians.

Joseph Brown, who graduated in 1932, still holds the distinction of earning the highest marks -average 98-in the academic history of East High School

### **THE SCHOOL PAPER**

In writing a news or feature story for the school paper, use the characteristic newspaper style. In fact a carbon copy of all publicity releases with more detailed information should find its way to the desk of the school editor. English compositions, interviews of various kinds, intramural scores, and other items not particularly desired by commercial newspapers often find a ready haven in the school publication. The school paper reaches a small but receptive audience. It can be used to advantage.

Treat the student reporter with the same helpful courtesy and respect accorded the experienced reporter of a large metropolitan newspaper.

### **THE BULLETIN BOARD**

Well-written notices and announcements placed on the school bulletin board serve a useful publicity purpose. Use

the newspaper-story form. Type all notices and date them. An orderly, interesting bulletin board always has an assured audience among students and faculty.

#### PLACING THE STORY

Success in placing the publicity story depends on many factors. Contacts (knowing someone) may help occasionally, but contacts do not represent the master key that opens the door. Nor is it necessary to pay anyone to guarantee space in the news columns for worthwhile material (although here and there will be found an editor with an "itchy palm"). Newspapers and publications *want* significant items that can be used. No coaxing is needed to ensure publication of a well-written news item.

Some of the factors which bring success in placing the story have already been pointed out—interest, timeliness, and an acceptable style. There remains another factor generally overlooked, *i.e.*, the technical arrangement of the story.

#### WRAPPING UP THE STORY

The following procedures of technical nature are standard practice for any story submitted for publication:

1. Use standard-size paper (8½ by 11).
2. Typewrite or mimeograph the copy (double space).
3. Use one side of the sheet only.
4. Begin the story about halfway down the sheet so the copyreader can attach the appropriate headline.
5. Start near the top of all additional sheets and number each one at the upper right-hand corner.
6. "Slug" the story, *i.e.*, use an identifying word at the upper left-hand corner of each sheet to avoid loss of copy. Do not use clips or staples.

7. End each page with a complete paragraph.
8. Write the release date at the top of the front page. For example, "Release July 5, 9 A.M." "Release July 5, 3 P.M." "For immediate release."
9. Say "good-by" at the close of every complete story by the use of an end mark, such as #, 30, \*\*<sup>1</sup>
10. Never write two stories on the same sheet

There is still further work to be done if a high degree of success is desired in placing the story. The novice asks such questions as: Where should the story be sent? How should the story be sent? When should the story be sent? These questions deserve thoughtful consideration.

#### WHERE TO SEND THE STORY

It is too general a conclusion to state that the prepared item shall go to the newspaper. The story is best suited to a particular section of the paper. The writer should recognize this fact and know the precise editor or reporter who handles such stories. On small newspapers one editor may handle everything. On large newspapers the chances of the story being dumped into the wastebasket are reasonably high unless the story takes the most direct route to the appropriate desk.

If a news story aims at broad public interest, it belongs in the general news section of the paper. More people read this section than any other. The city editor's desk or that of his assistant represents the proper destination for stories of this type. A sports story naturally goes to the sports desk and society items to the society editor. On metropolitan papers still wider breakdowns are found, there may be a science editor, a magazine editor, a religious-news editor, an

<sup>1</sup> Reporters make common use of these symbols

education editor, a Sunday-feature editor, a letters-to-the-editor department, a women's-page editor, and an obituary editor.

Sometimes a news happening merits wider coverage than the immediate community. A story may be local, state, or national in interest value. Thus, when the faculty holds a tea, the news is of local interest; when a boy who plays three sports maintains an A average the story has state-wide interest; the news story of a girl who wins a national spelling contest may be of national interest.

Items that have state or national appeal can be relayed by telephone or telegraph to the nearest press wire-service office—Associated Press, United Press, or International News Bureau. The telegram should be used only when news is important today but worthless tomorrow.

#### HOW TO SEND THE STORY

Lay the groundwork by having a brief, informal chat with each of the editors—when they are not too busy. The best time to see the editor of an afternoon paper usually is after an edition has gone to press—about 1 or 2 p.m. If this is inconvenient, try the beginning of the shift. Attend affairs where newspapermen are present. Learn to know the photographer, the reporters, the copy boys. All of them may help. Never request that anything be printed. Let the story stand on its own merits. Let the press representatives know that from time to time stories will be directed to them for consideration.

The publicity item should be delivered personally or by messenger to the exact section of the paper where it has the best chance of being printed. If an event or program seems newsworthy enough, a telephone call to the editor may produce a reporter and photographer at the appointed time

and place. In such cases the reporter knows news, but he may not know how to interpret educational terminology or methods to the general public. Someone from the school can be of assistance to him.

In Baltimore, Maryland, the schools contacted the editorial staff of the *Baltimore Evening Sun* in the interests of improved publicity for worthwhile educational activities. A committee from the education department worked with the newspaper reporter assigned to the job. These conferences helped to identify newsworthy aspects of the school program. The reporter became acquainted with supervisory personnel, school principals, and teachers. He observed classes at work and wrote his stories. He often captured the spirit of the learning situation and communicated this spirit in language that appealed to the general readers of the paper. This procedure represents one way of spelling "How" with a capital H.

#### WHEN TO SEND THE STORY

Timing is highly important in the placement of stories. Papers want the news before it gets cold. From the moment an item becomes public knowledge it begins to lose news value. Thus the story must meet the *next* deadline of the local paper. In simpler words, it must reach the city or sports desk in time to be processed before the paper goes to press. The deadline for radio, newspapers, and other media should be learned and met, otherwise the returns may be meager.

Some stories, especially of the feature type, have a better chance of appearing in print if another type of timing is practiced. A study of the local paper will disclose that on certain days of the week more space is available for feature stories. This condition results from fluctuation in advertising

## **WRITING AND PLACING PUBLICITY STORIES**

demands. Saturday papers usually are "tight" and carry a minimum of news or features. By all means do not release a story on Saturday if it can wait for another day.

A teacher of physical education with a sense for timing was rewarded with frequent "spread" stories by the following simple expediency: He prepared advance features based on the high-school program and waited until the weather forecast predicted rain. On each of these days he sent his story to the sports desk. With the major-league baseball games rained out, an abundance of space permitted the local physical-education program to receive top play.

### **PRESS RELATIONS**

Play no favorites on news articles. Send the item to all local papers and radio stations as soon as the event occurs. A feature story, however, should be sent to one paper only. The exception is, if the story is "pegged" to a news item, it may be rewritten for each of the possible media.

The frequency of "making" the papers often depends on the soundness of school relations with newspapermen in key positions. Some ways to develop good understanding follow:

1. Take it for granted that editors are fair.
2. Assume that they know best.
3. Be candid, cooperative, and available.
4. Try to anticipate the needs of the paper.
5. Be natural in all contacts with the press.
6. Seek suggestions.
7. Be ready to repay favors with favors.
8. Establish good working relationships with everyone who can help.
9. Always be on the level.

### **SMOOTHING THE ROAD**

A few additional suggestions may help in placing newspaper stories. The personal relations the teacher has with the editor may cast the balance on close decisions. Over a period of time newspapermen may often reach the decision that the source of information from a particular school is always truthful. The school's stories contain the same kind of factual material the reporter would have obtained, the school plays no favorites, and there is no possible chance that the paper may be embarrassed by running a second-hand story. Interested teachers in the school try to co-operate and want suggestions on how best to meet the style and policy of the paper. These teachers understand that the story will be judged by how interesting and significant it is, not by where it came from.

When an individual writes a publicity story, he actually represents an extension of the newspaper staff. He should conduct himself in such a way that his activities serve the medium of his choice. He is expected to exemplify sound judgment, integrity, reliability, frankness, frankness, accuracy, news sense, and writing ability.

### **THE EDITOR KNOWS BEST**

Occasionally a story may be rejected for publication. Perhaps the story seemed to qualify as news. It was written in the characteristic newspaper form. The teacher personally took the copy to the city desk long before the deadline. But the paper came out, and conspicuously missing was the story on which so much time and energy had been expended. This can happen and often does. Who is at fault? The natural reaction is for the writer to blame himself or

the editor, but, before deciding to condemn anybody, consider what transpires in a newsroom day in and day out.

The editor faces a series of "make-up dummy" sheets. The advertising space has been allotted and marked off. There is left an exact number of columns to be filled with material. Certain daily features, such as syndicated columns, comics, and crossword puzzles, must be included. The remaining space is available for what the editor believes will be most interesting to the greatest number of readers.

National news pours in over the leased wires. Reporters scurry back and forth with the important local news of the day. The school story, no matter how well-written or how important to certain groups, must compete for space with every other item of the day. If more important and interesting happenings occur and the paper is "tight" (not much space), the school story may be eliminated or cut down. The editor usually is adept at knowing what the public wants. His job depends on it.

#### SUMMARY

Publicity stories must be written in the characteristic newspaper style.

The climax of a news story comes first, and usually the most interesting facts appear in the first sentence.

The publicity story is written with an impersonal, objective point of view; it presents facts and allows the reader to use his own judgment.

The reader will grasp the news better if it is told to him simply and clearly.

News consumers are interested in speeches because they may inform, influence, or entertain. Speeches often focus attention on controversial issues.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

A speech or talk can produce at least three different kinds of news stories: (1) the preliminary, or advance; (2) the speech report; and (3) the follow-up.

In publicizing a speech, the lead paragraph should include the most important thing said by the speaker in addition to the who, what, where, why, and when.

The interview gives a wide range for the publicity story and includes such types as interviews for facts, opinions, and personality.

The length of a story depends on the available facts and although brevity is desired completeness also is essential.

The use of trite, worn-out phrases should be avoided, clearness, conciseness, and originality in expressing ideas should be cultivated.

One- or two-sentence general-information shorts about an available subject can be used by editors as "fillers."

The publicity item should be sent to a particular section of the paper, such as the city or sports desk.

Papers want the news before it gets cold. The deadline for radio and newspapers should be known and met.

Do not play favorites; send the news item to all local papers and radio stations as soon as the event occurs.

School relations with newspapermen in key spots can be developed, make friends with editors and reporters.

The editor will print what he believes the public wants to read, and usually his judgment is sound.

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of telephoning a story to a newspaper?
2. Is it a good plan to clear all stories with the school principal or superintendent? State arguments for and against this policy.

## WRITING AND PLACING PUBLICITY STORIES

3. Should teachers avoid being quoted on controversial subjects? Explain your answer.
4. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having students handle publicity for newspapers and radio.
5. Is it probable that the general public will get a distorted picture of a school's curriculum if teachers of so-called "special" subjects engage in writing publicity stories more actively than academic teachers?
6. If an unfavorable story breaks in the school, how should it be handled? Should it be "hushed"? denied? What should be done?

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In short when you are writing an article, you will wish either to set out and make memorable a given selection of information, or you will wish to deal argumentatively with some proposition, pro or con.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Feature Article*

EIGHT

A story entitled "Teaching for Correct Posture" will interest only a limited number of people. Yet the same basic nucleus of facts grew into a nationwide magazine article when a writer approached the subject from the arresting angle of "Your Aching Back."<sup>2</sup> As usual, the interest in this story was more in the manner of telling it. Features are created to amuse, entertain, and divert. They also carry as part of their task the business of informing, instructing, and advising.

The feature story is characterized by unity, a dominant tone, and a big cential effect; it has great reader appeal. There is exploitation of the interest which every human has in himself and in other human beings. Yet, the feature must contain facts. It must have a "news peg"—it must deal with something people think about.

<sup>1</sup> Gorham Munson, *The Written Word*, a Creative Age Press book, Farrar, Straus & Young, Inc., New York, copyright, 1949.

<sup>2</sup> Henry LaCossitt, *Collier's*, Aug. 26, 1950.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

This feature was reported in the magazine section of a newspaper:<sup>3</sup>

### COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE PROGRAMS CHANGE THE CONCEPT OF A HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

The concept of a high school education has broadened considerably in the past decade and unless you have teen-age sons or daughters who keep you informed on school activities you will probably be amazed to learn what is being done for youngsters today.

It is no longer considered enough just to give boys and girls a sound education and let them out in the world to shift for themselves. When you went to school, counseling was probably pretty much limited to individual cases who were obviously in need of guidance, but now schools are carrying out a comprehensive guidance program which reaches every student. The aim today is not only to give children a solid educational foundation, but also to develop well-rounded personalities prepared to cope with the complex problems of a troubled world.

New Haven's high schools are leaders in the guidance field. In the past few years. . .

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### VARIOUS TYPES

The purpose of a feature story differs but slightly from the public-speech or news story. All three deal with the important matter of securing attention for, and arousing interest in, existing or contemplated affairs. If reader attention is not secured, all else is lost.

Almost limitless possibilities exist for features about schools, programs of instruction, teachers, and students. As a general rule, these types of stories are longer than routine news items and command more newspaper space. Obviously,

<sup>3</sup> "Comprehensive Guidance Programs Change the Concepts of a High School Education," *New Haven Sunday Register*, Apr. 8, 1951.

this gives a wider latitude in explaining or interpreting various aspects of the educational program. Some of the more common feature stories relate to such issues as the following:

<b>Human interest</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Oddities</b>	<b>Trends</b>
<b>Familiar places</b>	<b>News peg</b>
<b>Obscure places</b>	<b>Contrast</b>
<b>Historical events</b>	<b>Familiar persons</b>
<b>Controversial questions</b>	<b>Obscure persons</b>
<b>Predictions</b>	<b>Occupational types</b>
<b>Parallels</b>	<b>Guidance</b>
<b>Achievements</b>	<b>Seeking causes</b>
<b>Events</b>	<b>Cumulative interest</b>
<b>Health</b>	<b>Suspended interest</b>
<b>Peculiar situations</b>	<b>Reminiscences</b>
<b>Hobbies</b>	<b>Actions of children</b>
<b>Stunts</b>	

#### FEATURE LEADS

Unity constitutes a dominant tone in feature articles. One short cut to understanding the many varieties of such stories is through an analysis of the lead used in each type. Once the lead is written, the rest of the article readily falls into place.

*The news peg, or semifeature lead.* This lead emphasizes the news item. Background reference verifies and enriches the content of such news stories. Example:

The consolidation of all student funds, recommended last night by Howard Jones, superintendent of schools, will give rise to such problems as. . . .

*The question lead.* This lead relates to a problem of public interest. Example:

Will a single-session school day help or hurt the children in Bayville Grammar School? This question was debated for several hours by members of the faculty. . . .

*The descriptive lead.* Here the feature is in its setting, the physical appearance of some person or object. Example:

In these days of highly trained specialists it is refreshing to welcome back to Bayville, Thomas Leggit, a native son, who is not only a successful dramatics coach but also an expert teacher of English. . . .

*The staccato lead.* This lead consists of a series of phrases useful when the author desires to emphasize the time element. Example:

The chairman rapped for order "Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of the resolution, please raise the right hand. Carried by a vote of six to one!" Thus, ten years of striving for a new high school came to an end last night as. . . .

*The literary-allusion lead.* Here reference is made to a historical, fictional, or well-known character. Example:

In John Wilson, Bayville High School may have another Einstein in the making. When he earned 100 in a recent algebra examination, it marked his seventh perfect grade in mathematics. . . .

*The epigram lead.* A concise and pointed expression sets the tone of this lead. Example:

After last night's presentation of "The Web" at the High School auditorium it seems fairly certain that a star was born. The Olympian heights of Broadway may not exceed the reach of Joan Slavin who performed brilliantly in the annual dramatic offering. . . .

*The figurative lead.* This type of lead often sounds too "corny" or trite. Example:

When Miss Mary Carroll retires after thirty years of teaching in the seventh grade there will be left a dismal void difficult to fill. It will mark the extinction of a beacon light along the shadowed trail of education. . . .

*The contrast lead.* Contrast between the past and present suggests a good lead. Example:

Twenty years ago science at Each High was never like this. Now, there is fun and enjoyment as teachers strive to keep ahead of their pupils. Yesterday the class began the study of nuclear physics. . . .

*The historical lead.* A historical perspective makes a good lead. Example:

The new Towpath School landmarks the canal which passed through the village nearly a century ago. . . .

*The reminiscence lead.* Has anything like that ever happened before? Example:

Opening of the new elementary school calls to mind when the abandoned school was first built. . . .

*The consequence lead.* Here the possibilities resulting from an event are evaluated. Example:

Defeat of the recreation bill by the City Council last night deprives the young people of this community. . . .

*The trends lead.* Attention is devoted to what is new. Example:

Almost daily some incident happens that demonstrates the school's responsibility to develop moral values in children. Only yesterday. . . .

*The survey lead.* Any polling of facts or opinions makes a survey lead. Example:

Children of Mayville are better in arithmetic than they were twenty years ago, according to a survey just completed by Dr. Jeremiah P. Sully. . . .

#### HUMAN INTEREST

One of the most popular types of features is the human-interest story. This kind of story deals with people and their reactions to unusual happenings. Stories that describe the emotions of people under stress, that tug at the heart or bring a smile to the lips, belong in this group. They may contain little more than an anecdote or a simple experience in which persons act in a peculiar way, but editors welcome them as a relief from the crises of international politics and domestic economic problems.

This type of story appeals more to emotions than to intellect. Other ingredients include originality, complete truth in all the facts, and reasonable timeliness. For example, the story of an athlete who asked to be taken out of a game because of a stomach ache caused by eating doughnuts carried this headline:

SINKERS THEY CALL THEM  
AND SINKERS THEY ARE

Human-interest stories may be written about the teacher of a class in automotive engines who was late for a school event because his car broke down; the principal, long known for admonishing his pupils to work like "busy bees," who was presented with a miniature beehive at a student assembly; the student who fell off a ladder while tacking up a safety poster in the classroom; the nervous

teacher who carried peanuts in his coat pocket, and husked them in class; the school-board member who brought a candy bar to each board member at a meeting to "sweeten things a bit"; the high-school principal, a skilled musician, who improved student morale by playing the pipe organ during auditorium assemblies. In short, any story which will get a smile, create a feeling of satisfaction, or arouse a bit of sympathy is a possible subject of a human-interest feature. And of course there is always the following classic example: At a meeting of the Direct Mail Advertising Association, the speaker told of a young man who courted his lady by letter. He sent her a proposal every day for sixty-five days. On the sixty-fifth day, the lady married the mailman.

Almost anything children do interests people. The younger the child, the greater the human-interest story. Consider the school and community interest in the following story:

Mary Jane —, aged 11, combines a part-time job with helping her sixth-grade class. You see, Mary Jane has an evening-paper route which she and her collie, Mixture, cover each night. Once a week collections are made, and through collections Mary Jane has helped her class at Follett School. Of course her customers like Mary Jane, and they look for Mixture's appearance each evening, newspaper in mouth.

So it is only natural that customers became interested in Mary Jane's activities, too. Mary Jane has taken this opportunity to solicit unusual materials for social studies and science. Her accomplishments thus far this year include the following: fishing gear from Alaska; dishes used in China; a variety of encyclopedic and first-hand information on Asia and Europe; collections of pictures on life in Manchuria, Morocco, and Egypt; and two speakers have volunteered to talk with Mary Jane's classmates on their experiences in the Far East. All these and more to come have enriched the

study of "Countries of Our World" in Mary Jane's sixth grade.

**SUPPLEMENTING THE NEWS**

Many features are seminews stories. Such features can discuss recent events which have held public interest or situations based on present-day events. Many times these topics require analysis to clear up readers' mistaken impressions. Sometimes these are called straight features and tell about familiar things. They may discuss such things as the origin and history of flags on school buildings, recess periods; obscure places, such as the school kitchen, biology laboratory, or custodian room. The feature can describe the activities of familiar persons, for example, the teacher or bus driver. What is he like? How does he do his job? Obscure persons are good copy because people normally are curious. Always pleasing are such historical features as a discussion of reading or spelling fifty years ago or of education fifty years hence. So are practical guidance items. Columns upon columns are devoted daily to such features as travel, beauty, gardens, etiquette, hobbies, pets, personal problems, and the like. In the same way trips to the state capital, the school garden, student government, and other educational materials—especially with local significance—find an open door to newspapers and magazines.

The possibilities are endless. What is the school doing and why? What occupations do students pursue during the summer vacation? What are the views of teachers on topics of the day? Cheer leaders; May Day, reading, writing, and arithmetic; posture, open house for parents; the health examination safety provisions; first aid—these and more topics suggest excellent straight features.

**OCCUPATIONAL TYPES**

The occupational feature lends itself easily to interpreting or explaining basic concepts, in addition to telling about the work of an individual. A story covering the day's work of any teacher will of necessity explain something about the activities and subjects of interest to him. For example, a teacher about to retire contrasted modern education with her early teaching years. The result was a story with strong human-interest appeal, as is evidenced by the following excerpt from her story:

I don't know just how to compare the boys and girls of forty years ago with my fifth graders of this year. Children weren't too different then, but there were fewer things to interest youngsters in 1910. If a barn was built down the road from the school, it became an absorbing matter for everybody for weeks. Bernard and Tom now would be interested in a new house for a day or two, but not for long—too many other things happen.

Certainly it's harder to keep youngsters interested. It's harder to keep teachers interested, too. But we learn the same way. As teachers we still have to find the way to the heart and mind of Jimmy and Jane if we're to be happy teaching and if they're to be happy learning. That hasn't changed at all.

The home around each pupil has changed, too. Families did things together in 1910 and there were few times when family members weren't home at night. In these days families pursue their own interests after dinner—father at work or at the club, mother engaged in some community activity, and children watching television or viewing a motion picture. I fear these changes in home life account for many of the difficulties we have as teachers in trying to bring the home and school closer together.

I'd like to leave this thought with my friends on the faculty: "Every boy and girl responds favorably to the teacher who wants to help him learn, to improve in behavior."

Another example of this kind of story was the commotion caused when an attempt was made to oust a nationally known football coach. Many sports writers—often blamed as contributing to the overemphasis of sports—showed remarkable understanding of the coaching situation in general. One of them approached the story with an emphasis on the occupational hazards of the athletic coach:<sup>4</sup>

#### PITY THE POOR COACH

For reasons that are completely unsound but easily understood the colleges refuse to give their coaches the immunity that the other professionals on their faculties enjoy.

Ostensibly the professional whose forte is football is hired on the same basis as the instructor or professor who teaches Chaucer or calculus or home canning. Unfortunately, however, those who control our colleges know less about football than they do about anything else taught at their institutions, and where they would not allow public sentiment to influence their opinion as to whether a man can teach nuclear physics they are prone to let it guide them in their attitude toward a football coach.

This is so, of course, because college football is a public spectacle. The physics professor or the instructor endeavoring to pound the principles of a course in the European novel into adolescent skulls plays his little game in the privacy of his classroom. It is the tragic fate of the football coach that he must play his game in a stadium packed with shrieking amateurs—college kids, their girl friends, bank tellers, shoe salesmen and candlestick makers—and that by them he is judged.

<sup>4</sup> W. C. Heinz, *New York Evening Sun*, Nov. 3, 1949.

The college kid's incapabilities become his instructor's cross only on the football field. When he fails to answer the questions there, the coach is held at fault. You may say of course, that the college coaches are asking for it. They, more than any others, are profiting from the play of the kids, and so they must stand the blame and the losses. They are the only admitted professionals associated with the pageant, however, and so they are deserving of the most respect and consideration. . . .

The above editorial deals with football and football coaches. With slight improvisation, a skilled reporter might write a similar article about school superintendents, school principals, and teachers who have suffered dismissal on grounds about as untenable as those described in the preceding paragraphs.

In fact the following is an example of an editorial describing the predicament of a school principal and illustrating the growing trend of fairness exemplified by reporters' presentation of all sides of a controversial issue:<sup>4</sup>

#### — 'SCHOOL AND ITS PRINCIPAL

The \_\_\_ Board of Education owes a public statement to the parents of that town on the dismissal of \_\_\_\_\_, principal of the \_\_\_\_\_ High School. It is inescapable, from the statement of the principal, that the educational policies underlying the design of the town's new campus-style high school are at the root of the issue. Yet the board has declined to discuss those policies. And the refusal of a public hearing to the principal, a decision that may be overturned by petition under a new state law, represents an unwise method of putting an end to the dispute.

It appears to be a question of decisions on the advanced type of construction and an advanced program of education, made by the board despite the unofficial opinions of the

<sup>4</sup> Editorial, *The Hartford Courant*, Dec. 20, 1953.

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teachers who must administer it. The principal says he made no secret of his criticisms, although his advice was not solicited. He objects to what he feels are unworkable and costly elements of the plan. The board, of course, may be right. But its failure to submit its reasons for public review does not lend confidence to such a view.

Today's educational policies are in ferment. The recent report of Yale's President A. Whitney Griswold warned that elementary education is not meeting the requirements of contemporary life. The need for more teachers has been stressed often. The expense of modern schools has led to a cooperative desire to secure more and better facilities for less money. But the key word here is cooperative. The final view must be a synthesis of the ideas of architects, educators, and the teachers who must use the new facilities.

It has been suggested that \_\_\_\_\_'s new school will start a trend. If so, then it is only suffering the attacks and criticisms that always adhere to novelty. But the statement of Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ [principal] shows that to some extent the teachers have been overlooked in the drive to get a superior new school. Under those circumstances, the duty appears to lie with the board to make its position clear.

## MAGAZINES AND BULLETINS

Many aspects of the education program are worthy of magazine coverage. Some of the top publications feature such articles, but these are practically all the work of experienced writers. Few readers of these pages will replace such nationally known writers. Writing for the big magazines requires great ability and years of experience.

However, teachers can get their message before the magazine public. The better magazines continually search for timely, interesting pieces and welcome assistance in the form of suggested outlines of material. Interested teachers should not hesitate to contact magazine editors when they feel that some school program or activity is newsworthy.

Educational magazines, trade journals, professional bulletins, factory publications, American Legion magazines—all these periodicals use features. It is not too difficult to tie in education with some of the needs of such diverse groups. Any publication will carry stories that point out ways to benefit its readers.

Each magazine has its own coterie of readers, and an acceptable story must appeal to a specific group of readers. Roughly, these articles should deal with unusual, new, or unique subjects; they should impart useful knowledge or concern interesting personalities.

#### IDEAS FOR COLUMNISTS

Sometimes a teacher senses the possibilities of a feature and feels inadequate to cope with the problem of writing it. At such times the educator can submit the idea and factual background to the local columnist or reporter, who will receive any good idea with enthusiasm.

Be alert in providing tips for possible features to follow up a news story. For example, a New York City newspaper stated than an increasing number of motorists did not seem to believe in signs, at least the signs which said, "Play Street." A publicity-minded worker in the Childrens' Aid Society immediately telephoned the editor, and several days later a full-page layout of eight pictures and a feature story called attention to the fact that:

KIDS ARE SAFE  
IN PLAYFIELDS

No cars to dodge—no play-street hazards.

The story disclosed the fact that the Society had seven play centers and ten playgrounds in the city's congested areas.

Note the interpretative value of the following article

written by an alert sports columnist.<sup>6</sup> While the columnist uses sports as a medium, the general theme deals with parents and their responsibility for taking an active interest in school affairs that affect the welfare of students.

Fred V. Hein, Ph.D., of Chicago, a consultant on physical fitness for the Bureau of Health Education of the American Medical Association, believes that parents can become an important force for improvement in high school athletics. Dr. Hein asserts that parents are potentially the strongest factors in determining school athletic policies.

He points out that although most parents show enthusiasm for high school football they seldom contribute much toward making this and other sports a powerful educational influence.

Advocating medical examinations for all who participate in vigorous sports, Dr. Hein also says that "when a player is injured only a physician should decide as to his fitness to continue play." He is also of the belief that if a boy has been ill or had an injury that has kept him out of play for some time, a permit from a doctor should be secured before he returns to practice or competition.

The physical fitness consultant emphasizes that schools should supply the best equipment for contact sports and declares that it is the duty of parents to make certain this is done.

"Purchases of athletic equipment are sometimes made with economy in mind at so-called bargain prices. There are no bargains worth jeopardizing the safety of any boy."

Dr. Hein also made a plea for proper conditioning of players before the first game of a season. He writes that in many states the athletic code requires at least three weeks of conditioning before the first game is played with a suit-

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by permission of John J. Leahy, *New Haven Register*, New Haven, Conn.

able number of practice periods preceding the first contact scrimmage.

Advising that teams from small schools should play teams representing institutions of similar size, Dr. Hein made a case for his sane observation.

"The larger schools have more boys to draw from, and while it is possible that the first team may be equal in ability, the boy representing the small school may find himself pitted against four or five fresh players in a game each as capable as his predecessor. Under these conditions injuries are naturally more likely to take place."

The writer also had some pertinent comment to make on teams playing post-season games. He feels that the number of games should be pre-determined and held to regardless of pressure.

There is much food for thought in the observations of the physical fitness expert. Admittedly scholastic football in Connecticut is on a fairly sane level. But it is not perfect by any stretch of the imagination. Scheduling games almost before school begins, a recent Connecticut custom, should be abolished as a start in the right direction.

#### SUMMARY

Features are created to amuse, entertain, and divert, their task also includes the business of informing, instructing, and advising.

The feature story is characterized by unity, a dominant tone, a big central effect, and great reader appeal.

There are limitless possibilities for features about school programs, teachers, and students.

As a rule, features command a substantial amount of newspaper space.

Since unity is a dominant tone, the lead of the feature article sets the pattern.

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Some feature articles are news peg, question, description, staccato, literary-allusion, epigram, figurative, contrast, historical, reminiscence, consequence, trend, and survey leads.

Human-interest stories are about people, their reactions to unusual situations, their emotions under stress; they are stories that "tug at the heart or bring a smile to the lips."

Seminews features are based on recent events which require analysis and clarification of hazy impressions.

The occupational feature lends itself to interpreting the basic function of the teacher and of education.

Ideas and tips for feature articles can be relayed to columnists and feature writers.

Things to write about are (1) the program, its aims, and its endeavors (2) teachers and students, and (3) little-known facts about the school.

### **QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. The best way to improve ability in writing feature stories is to practice. Write an educational feature story based on one of the following subjects.

Human interest	Stunts	Occupational type
Oddities	Description	Familiar places
Guidance	Trends	Reminiscences
Historical questions	Contrast	Actions of children
Predictions	News peg	Seeking causes
Parallels	Familiar person	Sports figure
Achievements	Obscure person	Class project
Health		
Hobbies		

2. Select printed feature stories on education and analyze them with reference to unity, dominant tone, big central effect, and reader appeal. Evaluate the strong and weak points.

3. Invite a feature writer from one of the local papers to

## THE FEATURE ARTICLE

address the group; ask him to explain how he plans his work and prepares his articles. Make a summary of the most essential points brought out by the speaker.

4. What criteria do you propose for determining whether a teacher should attempt to write the feature article himself or seek the help of an expert columnist?

5. Try paraphrasing one of the articles quoted, substituting facts about a situation familiar to you.

6. Make a list of ten items about the school you know best that might form the basis for feature articles. Discuss your list with other members of the group and formulate a revised list of ten items. Discuss appropriate methods of getting these stories before the public.

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. . . athletics are and can be a vital and integral part of education. Let us not speak of athletic deemphasis unless we wish to deemphasize the total educational structure. Instead, let us further the issue of athletic reemphasis.<sup>2</sup>

## *Publicity for Sports*

NINE

A separate chapter devoted to sports publicity has several justifications. In the first place, many educators and other interested citizens believe that sports receive too much publicity. In the second place, a large measure of this criticism has arisen because school authorities have failed to render proper assistance in helping sports writers and columnists discover and use appropriate facts and information. In the third place, many of the techniques described in this chapter lend themselves to adapted use in publicizing other educational activities. Only experimentation can reveal how many of these problems could be resolved by the combination of intelligent school personnel, cooperative writers and columnists, and an informed public.

Many educators today have much in common with those sports writers a few years back who would complain

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Compton, then chancellor of Washington University, in an address delivered at the Annual Conference of the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, Boston, Mass., April, 1949.

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about the overemphasis of college football, only to peel off their coats and write two full sports columns or an entire magazine article, thus overemphasizing athletics still further.

Glance at the following headlines, each of which received nationwide coverage:

TOO MUCH STRESS ON WINNING TEAMS  
PHYSICAL EDUCATION GROUP IS TOLD

HIGH SCHOOLS ATTEMPT TO TAKE  
COMMERCIALISM OUT OF SPORTS

COLLEGE HEAD SAYS BOX OFFICE  
KIDNAPED FOOTBALL FROM PLAYERS

EDUCATORS SEE SCHOOL  
SPORTS AS "LIABILITY"

EDUCATOR HITS U.S.  
POLICIES ON ATHLETICS

Undeniably, sports has become a big business. With the development of sports educational values have become obscured. There is often a shoddy, unsportsmanlike decision of game rules and eligibility rules, with the emphasis on winning at any cost. A selected few sports activities usually monopolize the sport pages.

There are other evils too, causing pressure groups to reach the erroneous conclusion that games and contests must receive little or no publicity. In many quarters there is the further belief that most of the evils should be charged against sports publicity which makes heroes out of adolescents and gladiatorial contests out of campus games.

### THE SANE APPROACH

Despite these facts, positive rather than negative directions should be charted. Enthusiasm for sound athletic

policies will not emerge merely by condemning the so-called overemphasis of sports. It may be far more advantageous to remodel rather than tear down. It does not follow that deemphasis of sports will correct the faults or divert public attention to other worthwhile educational activities.

The movement to deemphasize sports makes about as much sense as discontinuing the study of chemistry and physics because such knowledge helps to develop atomic and hydrogen bombs used to destroy human life. The more sports publicity the better, provided it guides public opinion in the direction of understanding the true value of athletics and of education as a whole.

To begin with, the average public does not want sports deemphasized. The public which supports the schools is a dynamic factor. If it wants—and it does—its youth to engage in athletic competition, and if it wants the opportunity to view these spectacles, no amount of ranting by well-intentioned educators will effect speedy and appreciable change.

Wherein lies the answer? A successful football coach of a large university suggests at least a partial plan in an article published after he resigned his post.<sup>2</sup>

Football is a great game. I'm strong for it. The men who coach it are, generally speaking, honest and companionable, if somewhat circumscribed in their interests. I'm for them, too. The boys who play it are naturally the strongest, healthiest, most vigorous and aggressive of our youngsters. I'm for them.

What could go wrong with a game like that?

"Overemphasis on winning" is the way it is usually put. I

<sup>2</sup> Blair Cherry, "Why I Quit Coaching," *Saturday Evening Post*, Oct 20, 1951.

question the aptness of that expression. What's wrong with wanting to win?

Then do we mean "overemphasis on victory at any cost"? That's closer, but still not quite it. Actually, what football coaches hope for, rather forlornly, is a better-informed public that—either on its own initiative or through the guidance of capable observers—will establish a more accurate set of values.

#### THE REAL VALUES

The challenge ahead lies in interpreting and promoting the sound educational values inherent in sports. The public has to cultivate the desire to exert its influence in making sound athletic policies stick. The people in the community can be the strongest force in determining that athletics should be conducted chiefly for the good of the players. The right kind of sound interpretative publicity—and plenty of it—is the crying need. If schools and teachers and an informed public would fight intelligently the evils in sports practices, it would not take long to remove the evils and to establish athletics as a worthwhile educational activity of value to participants, to school morale, and to community welfare.

Effective publicity must consist of a continuous, planned, and concerted series of moves. Franklin D. Roosevelt was reelected repeatedly even though at each election time most of the newspapers were against him. Spot publicity every four years could not erase the day-by-day impression gained by the general public that somehow Roosevelt was doing a good job as President. This kind of publicity was continuous and successful.

The best method of improving sports publicity is to guide it continuously, not to ignore it.

**SCHOOLS ARE GUILTY, TOO**

Over the years the athletic Frankenstein's monster has reached its present form because school authorities have failed to recognize the need for properly interpreting educational goals. Sports writers and student correspondents who did not fully understand what they were viewing yet who were eager to satisfy an increasingly interested sports public aided in establishing many false values. Winning teams stole the headlines. Football backs who scampered across for winning touchdowns and basketball forwards who scored the most points attracted wide attention. In the absence of readily available and worthwhile facts, naturally the most obvious and most easily understood aspects of athletic contests were featured.

Even the smallest papers wanted lots of sports. The wire services sought a common denominator—sports news of interest everywhere. That is why professional sports first gained prominence, followed by the featuring of college and high-school sports.

By no strange phenomenon did the inevitable pressure on winning become the accepted thing. Coaches found themselves enmeshed in a vicious circle. Their jobs depended on winning records. To lose was a humiliation. Their attitudes and practices reflected the community's understanding of the subject.

All this will take a good deal of undoing. The specific public to be reached in redesigning sports emphasis is the sports-loving people of the community. The most direct medium is sports news, which has more universal reader appeal than any other kind of news. The emphatic reader and listener interest in athletics simplifies the matter of getting the real story to the public. Sports writers and

editors will welcome the cooperation and contributions of school authorities in presenting the facts.

Teachers can help remedy the distorted emphasis—not by trying to cut down athletic news but by giving the public an opportunity to see what else goes on in the schools. Serious consideration should be given to this point of view. Gross emphasizes this concept as follows:<sup>3</sup>

. . . In a society which marks the passing of the years by remembering who won the World Series, we wouldn't wish to tone down or reduce the scope of public interest in school sports.

The job that needs to be done, however, is to improve the knowledge of the public regarding what the schools are doing in the less dramatic and exciting phases of their work, including what is done between big games and between major sports seasons. . . .

#### SPORTS STORIES

Sport stories fall into two categories: (1) the spot news and (2) the feature. Reader interest determines the selection of material for publication. At one end of the scale is what the public wants to read, and at the other end is what schools and teachers want to emphasize. Newspapers are published for public consumption, and the customer cannot be ignored. The solution would seem to be this, to create an interest in the worthwhile aspects of athletics by explanatory feature stories before and after competitive contests; and to introduce unfamiliar activities, thus giving them a chance to grow in popularity. But by all means, the public must be given the information it demands.

<sup>3</sup> Rebecca Gross (Ed.), *Lock Haven Express*, as quoted in the *Pennsylvania Journal of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation*, December, 1950.

**REPORTING THE CONTEST**

Authorities on reporting sports activities frequently advise school writers on how to report athletic contests. These authorities urge school writers to emphasize in the lead the high lights of the event. Often the high lights are not the players who score the most touchdowns; sometimes the line turns in a magnificent performance.

There is a definite trend toward more accurate and comprehensive accounts of athletic contests. Perhaps those who direct athletic programs in schools and report the results must assume a part of the blame for the general misconception that surrounds these contests. Sports editors are interested in the facts—neither minimized nor magnified. The more facts collected, the more accurate will be the account of the contest. This means that a student manager or faculty assistant must be competent in tabulating statistics—all kinds of statistics and facts—to help the public understand that participants play as a unit.

There are four usual ways in which results of games reach the newspaper. It is the responsibility of the school to find out from the editor, ahead of time, which method he prefers. In each of the four ways the school should represent the guiding influence in interpreting the action.

The first method consists of assigning a sports writer to cover the event. Have someone meet the sports writer, stay with him, furnish him with personal and statistical background on the players (if he wants it; if he does not, do not annoy him), and provide him with statistical data about the game being played. Afterward, arrange for him to confer with the teacher-coach and players. It is essential that the reporter be convinced that the event represents a game played not only for the enjoyment of participants and

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spectators, but for educational values of potential merit. If the teacher-coach and players share this view and practice it, the idea and feeling will reach the public through the sports writer.

The second possibility is that the newspaper and wire services (AP or UP) may want the results relayed to them. Find out ahead of time exactly what is wanted. Perhaps they need the box score in addition to a lead. How long a story do they expect? What is the deadline? Obtain the necessary information as quickly as possible after the game and telephone it to the proper authority.

The third procedure involves sending the results of the game and story by wire. This can be done by telephone or by telegraph at the nearest Western Union office (check on the exact location beforehand). This procedure follows approximately the telephone-in method described above, with emphasis on finding out ahead of time exactly the length and kind of story wanted.

In the fourth method, the newspaper expects someone at the school to cover the game and write a summary of it. The writer may use the same form as the news story.

### **SPORTS-STORY LEAD**

The lead will include (1) the names of the competing teams and the winner, (2) the score of the game, (3) the place of the contest, and (4) interesting and important highlights. Examples:

East High riddled North's line with fancy trap plays for spectacular rushing gains and a 19-0 victory at Municipal Stadium yesterday.

John Smith's graceful long passing to a variety of leaping,

## PUBLICITY FOR SPORTS

lunging receivers gave East High a 31-0 win over West at Griffin Field last night.

Henry Jones climaxed an uphill battle with a three-run eighth-inning homer that earned South High a 5-2 triumph over Newton yesterday at Windsor Field.

Good pitching and tight fielding carried East High to a 1-0 victory over Morris yesterday at Windsor Field.

Because it persisted in missing the easiest shots with disheartening regularity, East High lost to South 59-55 in a ragged basketball contest at Reade Hall last night.

Here is an example of how four papers in different cities handled the lead of a football game between two small colleges. Note that the characteristic style is followed in each case: (1) " — College stormed back from a two-touchdown deficit to defeat — 26-14 today before a damp crowd of 3,000 at —"; (2) " — College hit its stride after a shaky first period and rolled to a 26-14 football victory over —"; (3) "Literally handed two touchdowns in the first two minutes of play, — was unable to cling to its advantage and went down to 26-14 defeat before —; and (4) " — College powered its way to a 26-14 win over — after trailing 14-0 in the opening minutes. It fought its way back into contention on . . ."

### AFTER THE LEAD

Once the lead has been written, follow it with an elaboration of the initial details and then present the other facts in a series of short, unified paragraphs, each dealing with one aspect of the game. These short paragraphs must be able to stand alone. Use the inverted-pyramid outline and present the facts of the story from an impersonal and objective point

of view. Be accurate always. Give first names as well as last names, and spell all names correctly.

**USE FACTS**

Stick to the facts. Statistical data provide story interest and decrease the possibility of devoting too much space to the achievements of one or two individual players. For example, a running score of statistical data made possible the following sample paragraphs:

Before they established themselves as victors, the lead changed hands 18 times and the score was tied on 14 occasions. That is how tense, how uncertain, how fiercely fought the struggle was.

After breaking a 2-all tie at the outset, East forged ahead to lead 14-6 and then 23-16, before North began to narrow the deficit in the final minutes of the first half.

John Smith did not score the most points, but he made his presence felt by grabbing 26 rebounds off the boards, intercepting 6 passes, and having 7 assists. Add to these contributions 12 points, and it assumes the proportion of a healthy contribution to the winning team.

The record shows Alan Webb spinning off left tackle for 12 yards and the winning score, but the passing of quarterback Carmine Toosches set the stage for the successful touchdown run. The East signal caller had one of his better afternoons, connecting with nine aerials for a total of 220 yards. To meet this continual overhead threat, the visitors were forced to gamble against what seemed to be the lesser of offensive thrusts—the ground game.

**THE SPORTS FEATURE**

Every player on the squad—especially the unsung substitute—represents a potential human-interest story. What

the coach has to say before and after a game is a feature possibility. A limited amount of research will reveal material for hundreds of feature articles. Here are a few suggestions:

Details of winning strategy	Comparisons
Injuries and other handicaps	Reminiscences
Criticism	Style of play
Comments	Teamwork
Predictions	Record of former years
New plays and tactics	Shifting of team personnel
Rivals	Human interest
Improvement of certain players	Background information

Pregame write-ups always interest the public. The style follows the news feature. Examples of leads include the following:

East High traveling along the bumpy football road this season hits its biggest bump when it meets powerful North on Saturday afternoon at Grimes Field. . .

There's nothing wrong with the North football team that a few more points per game wouldn't remedy, and the Lions are busy these days striving for ways to speed up their point production. . . .

Here is a story about a blocking back which, in addition to its human interest, is highly interpretative:<sup>4</sup>

Vinnie Cesareo, a halfback on the \_\_\_\_\_ team for three seasons, is one of those rare football players who gets as much satisfaction out of throwing a block as quarterback Carmine Tosches does in throwing touchdown passes. . . .

<sup>4</sup> Sam Cohen, sports editor, *Bridgeport Herald*, Bridgeport, Conn., Oct. 2, 1949. (Used by permission of the author.)

If you take seriously the old football axiom that the best way to stop a passing attack is to rush and smother the passer, then a hat must be tipped in the general direction of Vinnie who is the key protector in that tightly-guarded area known as the "pocket" directly behind the center.

In the days of the single and double wing, the names of key blockers were as well known as the ball carriers. Tom Harmon had his Forest Eveshavsky, Red Grange his Britton, Ken Strong his Cowboy Hill and Bob Chapius his Pete Eliot.

The T-decade will fade and forgotten will be the lads like Cesareo who make possible the extra precious seconds for the receivers to weave down the field into position.

A feature article written about the extra-point kicker who failed in several crucial games read as follows:<sup>1</sup>

ARNOLD COLLEGE MOANS—OH, THOSE EXTRA POINTS

The Fates sure messed up what might have been the football success story of the year. Playing football after a spleen removal operation is quite a feat and with a little luck, Johnny Young could have been the cavalry charge all by himself in pulling out of the fire a couple of games for Arnold. In those days of specialization in football, a key man is the placement kicker who operates under terrific tension every time he is rushed to the rescue. A key factor to be considered is that footballs take some funny hops, especially when kicked.

Against Coast Guard in the opener, the Terriers pushed across a last minute touchdown, making the score 26–27. Young's kick would have tied it. Two weeks ago, at Springfield, the Arnold team trailing by a single point, plowed to the three-yard stripe with less than a minute remaining. Young's placement was inches short. . . .

Two kicks may mean two ball games, but two games do not constitute a season. Four more contests loom ahead for

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 23, 1949.

the Terriers and Johnny Young will get his chance to wrestle once again with the fates. One thing is certain, Ray Stoviak, the coach, has the utmost confidence in him.

#### **THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

An excellent procedure in compiling information for feature-story material is to have each member of the squad fill out a preseason questionnaire. Appendix A contains a sample questionnaire of this kind.

#### **SPORTS-WRITING WORDAGE**

Years ago sports stories dripped with trite expressions and silly synonyms. The day of "Tigers chew the Bulldogs" is gone. Better newspapers prefer the clear, concise, and correct expressions. Symbolic names like the Green Wave, the Crimson Tide, the Snarling Lions, the Golden Bears (a common device at one time) are now used only when the writer needs a synonym. An experienced sports editor says:<sup>1</sup>

The unholy jargon, the tendency to call things by names other than their own, the presentation intelligible only to the initiate, has faded out of sports writing to a large extent. It is now becoming fashionable to call teams by their right names, and to be clear and definite about what happened. The horrendous clashes of fearsome Tigers and snarling Wolverines, which were concluded in purple sunsets, now are taboo in the better sports departments.

It is fallacious to believe that sports writing requires a special kind of language. Slang phrases and bromides precipitate a one-way ticket to the wastepaper basket. Try

<sup>1</sup> Stanley Woodward, *The Sports Page*, Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York, 1949, p. xv

to avoid the following types of expressions and others like them:

bingle	pill	makes his debut
charges	exploded	brilliant rally
pellet	keen battle	forms the nucleus
pigskin	hot corner	superb guarding
eagers	run roughshod	
horsehide	sent to showers	

Of course, synonyms may be used, but find the exact word or phrase that illustrates the thing or action it represents. A mere change of verbs creates a vivid picture of what really happened. In baseball, for example, a player hits the ball for a single or perhaps for extra bases. The word "hit" is all right, but it is meaningless, colorless—especially when another word describes exactly the type of hit. Some baseball writing leaves the reader uninformed as to whether the ball was savagely hit or merely popped. A batter can "line out" a single or he can "loop" it. Picture a base hit, and it is certain that one of the following verbs will better describe it than "hit".

cracked	lined out	smacked	clipped
walloped	tapped	stroked	pounded
baugd	slammed	whacked	pushed
propelled	hammered	poled	blasted
rammed	powered	caromed	nudged
smashed	poked	dumped	socked
slugged	belted	wafted	rattled
clouted	busted	slapped	punched
whistled	paddled	spanked	swatted
snapped	lashed	drilled	pumped
sliced	bounced	clubbed	blopped
slashed	lanced	zoomed	
dribbled	scratched	caressed	

The best way to learn precise words and exciting descriptive phrases is to study the newspapers and follow the techniques of successful writers.

#### STATISTICAL BACKGROUND

At the start of each sport season, a "dope sheet," or brochure, should be mimeographed and sent to local newspapers, radio stations, opponents, faculty members, alumni, and others interested in the sports program. The brochure must be simple and concise—not more than two or three pages. It should contain the schedule, brief general information (location of the school, colors, nickname, type of play used), a few words about the coaching staff, a squad roster (with first and last names, ages, positions, heights, and weights), the previous season's record, and a few paragraphs of direct quotations from the coach, indicating the kind of season he anticipates.

When games are played, statistics other than those compiled by the official scorer help to describe the contest accurately and to furnish material for aftergame features. A student manager makes a good team statistician. He is indispensable in basketball and in football. In baseball, track, tennis, and other sports the action moves slowly, enabling the score keeper to compile the necessary data.

#### BASKETBALL STATISTICS

The following simplified method is recommended for basketball. On a single page mimeograph two basketball "keyholes," as shown in Figure 1. On one side insert the names and numbers of the local squad. Before the game, write in the names and numbers of the opposing players. Each completed sheet provides a statistical record of the half. As each player attempts a field goal, record his number

approximately at the spot where he stood. If he scores, encircle the number. At the conclusion of the half or the game, the following data are available: (1) the number of shots attempted by each team (count the number), (2) the number of shots made by each team (count the circled numbers), (3) the field-goal percentage of each team (divide the number of shots made by the number attempted), (4) the number of shots taken by each player, and (5) the number of baskets made by each player.

The score book will augment these data by giving the number of attempted foul shots, the number of successful foul shots, and the number of personal fouls. The average of each player and the team averages can be compiled and used as background material from game to game and from season to season.

To go a step further, it is helpful to keep a running account of a basketball contest. Merely record the player's last name, the type of scoring shot, and the running score at the right margin of the sheet, as shown in Figure 1, with the home-team score first. A horizontal line at regular intervals indicates approximate time intervals. For example:

Smith—hook	2-0
Smith—set side	4-0
Jones—corner push	4-2
Lasky—set corner	4-4
Smith—lay-up-fr Lester	6-4
<hr/> 5 minutes	

Translated, the preceding record means that at the end of the first five minutes of the game the local team led by a 6-4 score. All three goals were made by Smith. The first was a hookshot, followed by a set shot from the side. Opponents Jones, with a push shot from the corner, and

Lasky, with a set shot, evened the count at 4-4. Smith scored on a driving lay-up after a nifty feed by Lester.

In recording fouls, the name of the shooter comes first, followed by a symbol of some kind to indicate the type of foul and then the name of person who committed the foul. If the foul is missed, repeat the score on second line; if it is made, record the change in score. For example:

Smith Jones 7-4      (*Smith hacked by Jones in the act of shooting, Smith made the first shot and missed the second.*)

7-4                    (*Smith awarded one shot and made it.*)

Other symbols could be: --1      (*Pushed underneath own basket.*)

1--      (*Pushed under opponent's goal.*)

A running account of the entire game using the above system requires no more than one sheet of paper.

#### **FOOTBALL STATISTICS**

Football is another activity which requires a special compiler of statistics. Helpful data are the number of times each back carried the ball and how many yards he gained or lost, the number of passes attempted and the number completed, passes intercepted, yards gained passing, yards gained rushing, number of kicks, average yards per punt, and the number of tackles made.

A running account of the game helps the public to realize that football is a contest of eleven boys working together. An analysis of the assignments on touchdown plays or on defensive maneuvers aids in clarifying the sometimes obscure functions of many players.

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HOME TEAM			
	A	D. R.	O. R.
1			
7	II		III
9			
13		III	
14			
15			
18			
19			

OPPONENT			
	A	D. R.	O. R.
21			
23		II	
27	I		
36			
37			
39			
44			

A - Assists

D. R - Defensive rebounds

O. R Offensive rebounds

Statisticians use a chart system for recording the progress of a game. Each period is charted on a form that depicts a miniature football field with numbered yard lines. A kick is designated by a wavy line, a run by a straight line, a forward pass by a broken line, and a penalty by a series of X's. Downs are indicated by dots, and a circled dot represents a first down.

Despite the merits of the preceding system, it seems much simpler and equally as accurate to use a technique similar to the one suggested for basketball. For example, at the left margin record the ball location at the start of the play. At the extreme right margin show where the ball was grounded at the end of that play. In between the margins appear a brief description of where the ball carrier ran, who handled the ball, and the type of play. Each series of downs is shown by a double horizontal line.

E 40	Jones—direct pass over center for 3	E 43
E 43	Smith on hand-off—dropped by le	E 43
E 43	French pass—incom	E 43
E 43	Young punt to Lasky at W 23 back to 33	W 33
	=	

Translated, the preceding means that in a series of plays starting from the East 40-yard line Jones took a direct pass from center and hit the middle of the line for a 3-yard gain. Smith, on a hand-off from the quarterback, gained nothing when the left end stopped him at the line of scrimmage. An attempted pass by French was incomplete, and Young was forced to kick. His 37-yard punt was handled by Lasky, who brought it back to the West 33-yard line.

The system just described makes many facts available for quick reference. A summary can be compiled at the end of each quarter, and together with the facts gathered

by the statistician, an accurate and complete picture of the game is available for publicity purposes and for the coach.

#### BASEBALL STATISTICS

Baseball has a well-standardized scoring system. Each position (player) is identified by a number. For example, 1—pitcher; 2—catcher, 3—first baseman, 4—second baseman; 5—third baseman; 6—shortstop, 7—left fielder; 8—center fielder; 9—right fielder.

Symbols are used for brevity to indicate the action. Examples are K—strike-out; H—hit batsman, G—grounded out shortstop to first baseman, F—fled out to right field, B—base on balls.

Sidelight facts are helpful in baseball, too. If a player hits a home run, it is worthwhile to know what pitch he hit. Does the player bat right- or left-handed? Does the pitcher throw overhand or side-arm?

#### SMARTEN UP THE PUBLIC

Professional prize fighting is a sport where winning may represent the difference between success and permanent injury. Fight crowds by the thousands gather presumably to see somebody's brains knocked out. Let one of the contestants use unfair tactics and the crowd roars its disapproval. Why? The public sees and understands the foul tactics, and being an American crowd, it does not approve.

The unfair tactics, the attendant evils in school sports, would be just as unpopular if the general public understood these transgressions as well as it does the blow below the belt in the fight ring.

That is the very reason why schools and teacher-coaches should take an active interest in sports publicity. Getting

stories into the papers is an easy matter. But the bigger problem is to get the right kind of stories over to the people—the selling job of ignored values and the fight to destroy the evils that have found a home within the structure of school sports.

#### PUBLICITY FOR INTRAMURAL ATHLETICS

Intramural athletics, predicated on participation by all, suggests an excellent and worthwhile objective in any school program. Many educators often wonder why stories about these activities receive scant notice in newspapers.

The answer should be clear by this time. Newspapers print what interests the public. Jealousy of the widespread enthusiasm for interschool contests is not the answer. The sports editor does not care how many players participate. His question is always: How many people are interested in reading the story? Intramural interest must be developed, just as school sports had to battle their way in competition with professional sports. If the schools themselves keep intramurals hidden in the family closet, how can the public and the newspapers be expected to consider them worthwhile?

#### SUMMARY

Sports has become big business. It has picked up many attendant evils along the way, often these evils are blamed on sports publicity.

The more sports publicity the better, provided it helps to guide public opinion toward a better understanding of the purposes and values in athletic programs.

The people in a community can be the strongest force in

conducting athletics chiefly for the good of the players and the school.

The schools are partly responsible for the great emphasis placed on winning in athletic contests.

Sport stories fall into two categories: (1) the spot news and (2) the feature.

Reader interest determines what the newspapers print.

Sports editors are interested in the facts; the more facts collected, the more accurate will be the account of the game.

The lead sentence in reporting a game includes (1) the names of the competing teams and the winner, (2) the score of the game, (3) where the contest was played, and (4) the most interesting or most important highlight of the game.

Every player on the squad, and particularly the substitutes, represents a potential personal-interest story.

No special kind of slang is required for sports, the better newspapers prefer the clear, concise, and correct expression.

In sports writing, a mere change of verb often creates a vivid picture of what really happened.

At the start of the seasonal sport, a "dope sheet," or brochure, sent to everyone interested helps to publicize the sports program.

During the game, statistics other than those compiled by the official scorer can be helpful in accurately describing the contest and in furnishing material for after-game features.

The unfair tactics, the attendant evils in school sports, would be unpopular if the general public really understood these tactics and evils.

Interest in intramural athletics must be developed, just as school sports had to compete with commercial sports for public attention and support.

**QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Explain the emphasis on news of school athletics and other extracurricular activities. Is this emphasis justified?
2. Here are 32 synonyms for the word "defeat." What football scores come to mind as each of these words is examined? Blasts, batters, murders, pastes, whips, crushes, wrecks, jolts, spanks, outscraps, rolls over, romps over, upsets, routs, toys, dumps, bows to, tumbles, drops, trips, tops, sinks, buries, belts, wallops, wins, blanks, licks, trounces, subdues, turns back, edges.
3. Interview one of the school athletes. Find out how he keeps in condition between seasons. What are his likes and dislikes? What does he intend to do in later life? How well does he do in his academic classes? In your opinion has athletics helped or hindered him in the attainment of his proposed life work?
4. Make a study of one of the sports. Write a feature about it.
5. Is the coach superstitious? Will it make a good story? Is it advisable to write it? Explain.
6. List the educational values in sports.
7. Should the story of a contest be toned-down when the local team loses? Explain.
8. How can interest in intramurals be created for the general public?
9. Outline a plan for using present techniques of sports publicity to publicize the school as a whole; an activity other than athletic.

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**Pictures must not be too picturesque. Nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing. All great actions have to be simple, and all great pictures are.<sup>1</sup>**

## *Pictures and Exhibits*

TEN

Many persons in the publics to be reached understand the language of pictures and exhibits better than the spoken or printed word. Man has always been intrigued by pictures, and people would rather see something than read about it. A picture or an exhibit is a proved attention getter, an effective way of arresting initial interest and arousing curiosity.

What can be seen is tangible; sight conveys meanings much clearer than words. A good picture tells a story, interprets, dramatizes, entertains, and facilitates comprehension.

### **NEWSPAPER PICTURES**

Nearly everyone glances at the pictures in newspapers, whereas many stories are overlooked. The great number of news items compete with each other for interest. Pictures present no such problem. Human curiosity prompts a quick look at any picture and a longer perusal if the photograph

<sup>1</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, quoted in Gunnar Hori., *Public-school Publicity*, Inoi Publishing Company, New York, 1948, p. 83.

is a good one. Newspapers are picture-conscious because the reading public demands it.

The most popular types of pictures are action shots. A lack of animation—stiff and frozen poses—is fatal. Anything that makes a person stop, stare, and enjoy will be readily accepted. High on the list of possibilities are human interest, children, oddities, scenic beauty, contrast, colorful events, winners of awards, buildings, and, in short, anything that people will stop and view.

#### **GENERAL REMINDERS**

Pictures are rated on the basis of their personality, news value, and action. They should contain the basic elements of being (1) timely, (2) interesting, (3) instructive, (4) dramatic, and (5) well-captioned.

Will people pause to look? The picture must stand alone and show something in action. It must tell a story. It must have one center of interest. Too many persons crowded together tends to confuse. However, get people into the picture, especially in shots of buildings and playgrounds. Youngsters are a "natural," and this does not mean featuring the most beautiful or the brightest children. Outsiders can be grouped with the children and a new public created for education.

#### **PICTURES COST MONEY**

Teachers often depend too much on the newspaper photographer or the student amateur with a camera. As a result, there is a noticeable lack of picture coverage for many of the worthwhile activities of the school. A knowledge of the factors contributing to this shortage may help to clarify the situation.

Amateur pictures must be rephotographed, transferred into cuts and then into mats before publication. This involves additional cost for newspapers. In competition, the news services have available hundreds of prepared mats of interesting people and events from all sections of the world. These are ready for instant use. Despite the added expense and time involved, good local pictures still receive priority if they are readily available.

Many papers maintain their own limited staff of photographers to cover the principal spot or feature news of the day. Schools may use this service if the papers are alerted to important happenings. It is by no means an adequate coverage, since it is usually limited to events which interest the greatest number of readers. This of course focuses the emphasis on sports contests and dramatic activities.

#### THE COMMERCIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

If worthwhile portions of the educational program are to be presented in picture form, schools must meet the papers halfway by engaging a commercial photographer when the occasion demands. The yearbook and school paper can absorb part of the cost by using the pictures. The school thus obtains a year-round coverage of significant events. It is also possible to borrow newspaper cuts for the school paper. Selling duplicates of pictures to students and parents may help to defray a part of the cost.

To depend on amateur photography is too big a gamble. A good shot that does not come out well expends time and effort, and a second chance to recapture the picture seldom occurs. A much stronger reason for employing experienced photographers is that a picture must have a peculiar definiteness to ensure a good print.

**THE KIND OF PRINT WANTED**

A picture taken with a good setting and with the knowledge of how best to pose it may even result in wasted effort if the print cannot be reproduced clearly for newspaper use. It has to be mechanically right—a strong and sharp focus with the white, a clean white and black, a rich black. Too many dark areas tend to merge with the features of individuals or the details of objects. The faces and persons have to be clear-cut and in contrast with the background. A good plan is to pose individuals with dark clothes against the horizon or a white building. On indoor shots, pose the subjects a foot or two away from a wall.

Newspapers prefer glossy prints, 8 by 11 inches in size and flexible in composition. This means that the picture can be "cropped" (cut down) or "blown up" (enlarged) for use as a four-, three-, or two-column spread. Small groups of two or three persons in a picture facilitate this process. A crowded picture increases the difficulty of cropping it without that blurred appearance so annoying to most viewers.

Subjects should avoid looking directly into the camera. They should *do* something rather than look blankly into space. Experience shows, however, that good action shots are difficult to catch. Many pictures may be wasted in the attempt to snatch a particular bit of action. The most sensible advice is to settle for a posed-action picture. This means stopping the action at a particular point and having the subjects hold that pose momentarily. Sometimes posed-action shots have more of an action look than authentic action pictures. A study of pictures appearing in newspapers and magazines will furnish a good general guide to follow.

**CAPTIONS**

The two or three sentences of print appearing under a picture comprise what is called the "caption," or cut lines. A caption describes the situation or event and identifies the persons in it by first and last names in this fashion:

Girls at East High School know about dietetics because they have learned the importance of food as one of life's necessities. These girls are making cookies in a home-economics class. Left to right they are Helen Worth, Sally Lynch. . . .

Although a picture in itself should tell most of the story, a good caption is a tremendous help.

The caption should be pasted to the picture before submitting it to the newspaper, photograph service, or magazine. The accepted method follows. Type the material at the top of a half sheet of 8- by 11-inch paper. Place the half sheet on the picture and move it down so that the blank portion of the caption sheet can be folded to the back of the picture and pasted there. Use no clips and always glue to the *back* of the picture.

**SPOT-NEWS PHOTOGRAPHS**

Like the news story, the spot-news photograph must make the next issue of the paper or it may lose out. There are several ways of cutting corners in getting a picture into print. A list of some of these ways follows:

- 1 Take the pictures at a rehearsal session several days before the actual event. For example, if a school production of Robin Hood is to be given on Wednesday night, a picture of one of the scenes can be taken on Monday and sent to the editor's desk so as to arrive by Wednesday.

night—truthfully captioned “Students of the junior high school rehearsing a scene of the play which was given last night. . . .”

2. Take a picture of a scene early in the program, thus allowing time to develop the film. Most of the action football and other sport shots are captioned, “Joe Doakes, early in the first quarter . . . ,” or “In the first inning the. . . .”
3. Alert teachers to the need for such pictures so that all school areas receive appropriate coverage. The hatching of chicks in a biology laboratory, the assembly of a finished product in a cabinetmaking shop, or the modeling of clothes in a sewing class has dramatic value and interest for many people in any community.
4. Keep in mind that the focus of interest is the pupil, even though the work of the class and teacher should receive emphasis. Pictures of finished jobs alone, whether in social studies or machine shop, have little news value. Jobs in process with pupils actually performing the operations create interest.
5. Find out from the editor what kind of picture he wants and make arrangements with the commercial photographer to lend you the plate which can be rushed to the editor.

#### **FEATURE PICTURES**

Most of the pictorial opportunities for schools are known as feature pictures, they are generally accompanied by a story that explains the activities or personalities shown. Music, home economics, and dramatics offer many possibilities for “layouts,” that is, a group of several pictures with a central theme.

By improved communication between teachers and

## PICTURES AND EXHIBITS

schools in various parts of the country, feature pictures used successfully in one locality can be used by schools in other communities.

Occasionally, a human-interest or unique picture may have possibilities for country-wide interest. Many services are on the lookout for such photographs. Simply mail a print of the picture to one of the press services.

## EXHIBITS

The value of an attractive exhibit as a public-relations medium is based on the premise that it draws attention and arouses the imagination of people. An excellent example in recent years is the tuberculosis movement which gathered support from traveling exhibits—exhibits that used X rays, pickled lungs, and similar eye-catching displays. Exhibits can be made of anything capable of being seen and can be shown wherever there are people to view them.

Every subject field in elementary and high schools contains potential material for an exhibit. The following are examples of possible exhibits: major word lists used in English with accompanying drawings to show the history of words or ideas; illustrations of scenes found in plays or stories; scale models produced in mathematics (constructed with help from the art teacher); illustrations of persons using physics and chemistry in their work; human-interest maps used in history to show the relationship between people and resources. The list of possibilities for exhibits is endless. Be sure to stress the work of pupils in every exhibit.

On occasion it may be well to include a pictograph of the school dollar and how it is spent. The work of the adminis-

See Appendix B for a list of newspaper feature syndicates, radio networks, newspaper wire services, and photographic syndicates.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

tration in allocating school funds and supervising their expenditure can be shown in chart form.

A good exhibition, however, requires clear thinking and planning with a definite aim and a specific audience in mind. It is not an opportunity to show off. The presentation must be simple, and the story must be told in an interesting fashion. Too many things crowded together may tend to confuse the audience. Items essential to the achievement of a specific objective should be presented.

### **PEOPLE WANT TO SEE**

What will people look at in an exhibit? They will look at something they have heard or read about but have never seen, something that is new to them, something with a direct meaning for them or for their friends, something familiar presented from a new viewpoint. They will look at anything that enables them to learn.

There are many proved attention getters, some of which can be used without cheapening the exhibit. Moving lights attract the eye. Mechanical devices include card-shifting machines, opening and closing of doors, push buttons, peep-holes, and view boxes.

Entertainment items help Grown-ups, like children, learn more easily when they have fun. People like to touch to explore, to participate as they find the answers to such questions as how many calories in a pint of milk, or how is the tax dollar spent in supporting public activities?

### **PLANNING EXHIBITS**

Advance planning is required for effective exhibits. The essential purpose, the basic idea, the materials needed, the cost involved, and all the other factors must be put down in writing. The layout must give consideration to color.

scheme, design, lettering, pictures, models, objects, and lighting.

The exhibit should be self-explanatory. For this reason design is a vital factor. Simple principles of art, based upon the effective use of line, facilitate sight and comprehension. Planned exhibits direct the vision of the viewer in such a way that the selling point is clearly and easily reached. The eye is guided through a planned course to a logical climax.

A color wheel can help to point out the complementary colors—such as green-red, blue-orange, and violet-yellow. Some colors have become associated in the public's mind with certain meanings, such as white for purity and cleanliness and red and green for Christmas.

Statistics broken down into smaller units are more readily understood. For example, the Dry Dock Savings Bank in New York City in a series of window exhibits digested the findings of a Federal report of waste in Washington in this way:

For every stenographer and typist employed by the Government there are 3.6 typewriters.

It costs the Government  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents to print and deliver a 2-cent postcard. As 86% of these postcards are used by commercial concerns, you and I pay the freight.

Cost of processing a single government purchase order is \$10. Of 3,000,000 government purchases in one year, each costing \$10 to process, over one-half were for items costing less than \$10.

Statistics need a standard, a basis for comparison. Tie in the figures with something the public recognizes as good or bad.

Words in an exhibit are best grouped according to their meaning, and each word or group of words is considered as

a block. The blocks can be balanced with illustrations or color masses.

Blown-up photographs are a good source of illustration. Sometimes photographs can be combined with objects, for example, a picture of a real gavel attached to the hand of the student-council-president.

Miniatures and models add realism to an exhibit. A highly effective use of a model posed the question: "Why not light up the schools for recreation?" The exhibit presented a model of a city street with cardboard buildings, showing well-lit dance halls, pool rooms, theatres—and a dark school auditorium and gymnasium!

Some schools use films to advantage. The Chicago schools have pioneered in utilizing films for purposes of public relations. The board of education has a film council which produces 16-millimeter motion pictures in both color and sound. These films show educational developments and equipment needs to teachers, parents, and other interested groups. The films are distributed free of charge.

There are other possibilities, such as the use of maps, chart, diagrams, silhouettes, dioramas (three-dimensional displays), slide films, movies, and panel screens.

#### SUMMARY

A picture or an exhibit is a proved attention getter and a most effective way of arousing initial interest and curiosity.

What can be seen often conveys meaning clearer than words.

Human curiosity prompts a quick look at almost any picture; newspapers are picture-conscious because the reading public demands it.

Pictures should be timely, interesting, instructive, dramatic, and well-captioned.

Even though the newspaper has a staff photographer, schools should augment this coverage by employing a commercial photographer when the occasion demands.

Glossy 8 by 11 prints are preferable; prints should be definite in character and flexible in composition.

Education offers many possibilities for feature pictures.

An exhibit can be made of anything which can be seen. Good ones, however, must be planned with a definite aim for a specific audience.

The presentation must be simple and told in a fashion that attracts interest.

People will look at something they have heard or read about, something that is new to them, something with a direct meaning for them, something that enables them to learn.

Movement and entertainment items are attention getters. Use them with prudence to avoid cheapening the exhibit.

Planning of ideas, materials, layouts, and costs are essential for effective exhibits.

If statistics are used, they should be broken down into smaller units and tied in with something the public recognizes as good or bad.

Colors, designs, miniatures, models, charts, diagrams, and slides require special study before an exhibit becomes an effective public-relations medium.

#### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Explain in general terms the use of pictures and exhibits for purposes of public relations.
2. What essential items characterize newspaper pictures? Invite a news photographer to explain the nature of his work. Seek his advice on photographs for use by schools.
3. Suggest criteria for schools in the employment of commercial photographer; criteria that a board of education might adopt.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

4. Explain the terms cuts, mats, shots, prints, and layouts.
5. Prepare a set of directions for use in posing photographs for public relations.
6. Collect five or ten pictures of school activities from newspapers or magazines and write appropriate captions for each picture.
7. Select a school situation that a school might publicize by means of an exhibit and plan the exhibit, giving attention to objective audience, mechanical devices, entertainment, color, and cost.

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In a democratic society such as ours the ability to express ideas is just as essential as the capacity to have ideas.<sup>1</sup>

## *Speaking for Understanding*

ELEVEN

The very purpose of speech—securing understanding or motivating listeners to action—marks it as an indispensable instrument in public relations. It is especially valuable in conveying directly to others what a person desires, thinks, knows or feels. Every teacher with a sound program should have convictions which clamor for expression. Since motive is the mainspring for forceful speaking, the process of acquiring simple and definite techniques of getting ideas across to hearers should be fairly easy to master.

To help the teacher who admits, "I have nothing to say, and I wouldn't know how to say it if I did," is a somewhat hopeless task. Such a person cannot generate enthusiasm for his hazy ideas nor can he make someone else comprehend what he himself does not understand. This situation represents much the same kind of wasted effort as attempts to publicize a poor program.

<sup>1</sup> Alan H. Monroe, *Principles of Speech*, Brief Edition, Scott, Foresman & Company, Chicago, copyright, 1945.

### SUCCESS IN SPEAKING

Those who realize the importance of education and want others to know about it, too deserve assistance. They want to move their ideas directly down the road. This chapter may help them to get started, to keep from wandering, and to arrive at a profitable destination.

A speech is partly *what* is said; it is also *how* it is said. Success in speaking depends on (1) knowledge, (2) self-confidence, and (3) skill. Teachers really should have a wealth of clear and positive information. There remains only the preparation necessary to translate this knowledge into language people understand.

Self-confidence should represent part of a teacher's working equipment. Sandford, an authority on public speaking, advises his readers to participate in physical education and athletics to gain self-confidence. He says:

Participation in athletic games contributes form that is poise, ease and confidence of movement. People with physical training and men in good physical tone are able to sway audiences. They are active and alive; they follow through in their gestures and their vocal tones; they have physical poise and control. Because they are in good physical trim and because they know how to stand and to move, they attract their hearers.

### STEPS TO SUCCESS

With few exceptions, talks by educators are action-getting; they provide information with the objective of conviction and persuasion. There is more or less general agree-

By permission from *Speak Well and Win'*, by William P. Sandford  
Copyright, 1941 McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc. New York

## SPEAKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

ment on the steps to be followed in preparing such a speech. One public-speaking instructor recommends this sequence:<sup>3</sup>

1. *Communicate*—Get your ideas to your hearers.
2. *Illustrate*—Show the picture vividly and clearly.
3. *Motivate*—Show that the action you desire will satisfy the vital wants of those to whom you speak.
4. *Activate*—Not only make them *willing* to act, but *suggest* action; start them acting; *see to it that action takes place*.

Monroe suggests another outline for use in preparing a speech:<sup>4</sup>

1. *Attention*—Getting attention.
2. *Need*—Showing the need, describing the problem.
3. *Satisfaction*—Satisfying the need, presenting the solution.
4. *Visualization*—Visualizing the results.
5. *Action*—Requesting action or approval.

At first glance the preceding two outlines for preparing a speech appear quite different, but close observation reveals that they have much in common. The first outline presents in sequential order *what* to do; the second really emphasizes *how* to do it.

Both authorities agree on effective communication as a basic goal worthy of careful study. The supervisor of reading invited to address the local women's club, for example, wants to impress his listeners with the importance of improved reading skills and habits among school children. The superintendent appearing before his finance committee strives to present the school budget in a way that will receive favorable action. The principal calls a teachers' meeting to discuss significant issues that can be resolved only by intelligent communication. The person in charge of special

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*

education addresses a luncheon club to gain support for the educational program of the handicapped. The teacher or college professor knows that successful instruction depends upon a favorable interchange of ideas. Examples of the need for effective communication are limitless.

Skillful motivation helps a speaker to convince his audience that acceptance of his proposal will satisfy a distinct need. This need may apply to an individual, to a small group, or to community welfare. With reference to education, most public speaking deals with benefits aimed at large groups which will gain from the proposed action. Nevertheless, the speaker should remember that large groups are composed of smaller ones, with the home or the individual as the smallest unit to be reached. Thus parts of the speech are addressed specifically to individuals or to small groups of like-minded individuals; each group is motivated to action by the mutual understanding developed between the speaker and his several publics. For mothers of teen-age youngsters, the reading supervisor might stress the vocational advantages of reading skill and comprehension. In order to expand the program of continuing education in an industrial community, the school superintendent might emphasize the merits of capital outlay for a new building. At a teachers meeting on determining the avowed purposes of the school the principal might show how these purposes affect and benefit teachers in various subject-matter areas. The person in charge of special education may want immediate funds to provide better educational opportunities for the handicapped, but he might point out that such opportunities help to relieve the ultimate tax burden by enabling these persons to become self-supporting. In brief, motivation presents needs; it shows by clear illustration that appropriate action will bring desirable and tangible results.

Quite obviously, direct and intelligent action represents the ultimate aim of public speaking. Unless the speaker has a message that impels his listeners to action, he might better save their time and his by remaining silent. Direct and intelligent action depends largely upon the worth of the proposal and upon the ability of the speaker to establish friendly rapport with his audience. Any request for action should be made in a clear and pointed manner. When various groups discuss the proposal in their homes or other gathering places, there should be no misunderstanding or confusion about the action desired. Whenever possible, the speaker has the added responsibility of following up the address, evaluating the degree to which appropriate action takes place.

An excellent example of an appeal to the public to concentrate on winning the Second World War was given by Johnston, during a crisis on the homefront.<sup>1</sup> Note how he fulfills most of the above elements:

. . . We know we shall win this war despite every obstacle at home or abroad.

. . . But to do so we must reawaken to reality. There is no problem on the homefront that cannot be solved if devotion and patriotism and the will to victory transcends politics, selfishness, and fear. Let's get back to the spirit of individual and group sacrifices! Let's stop thinking that we can fight the world's bloodiest and most destructive war and still maintain the comforts, the wages, the profits, and the advantages of peacetime existence. Let's match the bravery and the sacrifice of the men on the bloody, suffering battle-fronts with an equal measure of devotion and determination and sacrifice at home. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Eric A. Johnston, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, in a radio talk on June 24, 1943.

**WIN AND HOLD ATTENTION**

Many times a subject so vitally interests a public that the speaker is assured of attention right from the start. More often, however, attention has to be won with the opening remarks. The following techniques may prove helpful:

1. Open with a question or challenge.
2. Open with a comparison or illustration.
3. Open with a startling question.
4. Open with an appropriate anecdote.
5. Definitely state the subject and show how it is of vital interest to the audience.

Start with something which challenges or shocks or with something that really matters to the hearers. Sincerity a strong belief in the subject, and enthusiasm by the speaker bring the talk closer to the listeners, especially if an effort is made to translate the ideas into terms experienced or desired by the audience. People are interested in money, health, fun, friends, pleasures, and all the other things that make for happier living. To maintain interest, good speakers use a familiar style and develop the techniques of contrast, suspense, conflict, and humor. Narrowing the subject often helps to maintain interest.

**CHOICE OF SUBJECT**

The subject content of any talk must contain information that interests the audience. The purpose of the speech, the audience, the occasion, and other factors may furnish clues to selecting and narrowing the subject. But there are specific and familiar patterns which seldom fail with an audience. Man's tendencies and basic reactions toward matters that

vitally concern his affairs make him attentive to certain appeals. Among the more common one might name self-preservation and the desire for his own well-being and that of his family, increase in self-esteem (ego expansion), and the glory appeal—dedication to a cause or to an ideal. The entire area of education abounds with materials which strike responsive chords among citizens of the community.

An appeal must be tied in with the wants and desires of the listeners. A speaker might well ask himself such questions as: Why should they be interested? What have they to gain? Are they in a position to do something about the problem? These are some of the questions people will ask themselves. Greater interest will arise if there is conflict of opinion about what is being said. Is the subject new or timely? Does it concern the solution of a definite problem? Never forget that above all else people are interested in themselves. Anything said to them must be personalized.

An audience often wonders how soon the speaker will stop. If this happens, the choice of subject may have been bad or the techniques of putting ideas across through the medium of the spoken word may have needed further attention. Suggestions and aids may be helpful, but, just as in writing, there is no substitute for practice.

#### SAY IT SIMPLY

A talk is worthless if it does not give the listener a clear understanding of the ideas presented. What is said must be put into words that unmistakably register the ideas on the hearers' minds. After all, a speaker wants to say something that will be understood. The fundamental approach is the use of clear, vivid, concise, and understandable words. Knowledge must be translated into the language of the people.

Analysis of the language used in the following excerpts from graduation speeches given by two college presidents reveals that, for the most part, the words must have soared over the heads of the audience One of these speakers said.

Public education is not neutral about the moral basis of a free society. Freedom is not the absence of discipline, it calls for discipline by internal restraint in contrast to the external police control of totalitarianism

The discipline of the free man is not submission of one person's will to that of another, but it is anchored in learning to balance tensions within one's self. The ideas of freedom, self control and balance are inextricably interwoven

The more powerful the instruments which a growing mastery of nature makes available to man the more urgent is the need for a true knowledge of the nature of the man who is to use the instrument

The other speaker intoned

There is too much of generalization and too little critical analysis in the promises so freely scattered about economic utopias which will be assured by political agencies and devices

There are stressed the need for protecting the immature student from false heresies and mendacious doctrines. This point of view would seek to maintain in the university a certain standard of convictions or creeds and exclude from the teaching force those who hold doctrines which do not conform to such a standard

Nothing is more certain than that such a policy would produce the most arid sort of scholasticism. Even more disastrous would be the failure of the university to train the student to form convictions reached by his own effort of reason

Simplicity does not mean talking down to an audience. It takes superior skill to put one's message into terms that listeners readily understand. In addition to the careful use of clear wordage, the following proved aids help the speaker to say it simply:

1. *Analogy or Comparison*—Point out similarities between that which is already known, understood, or believed and that which is not.
- 2 *Illustration*—Give detailed examples of the ideas presented.
3. *Specific Instances*—Give undetailed examples.
4. *Statistics*—Give vivid figures to show proportion of instances of a certain kind.
- 5 *Testimony*—Give the statement of a recognized authority that supports your contention
- 6 *Restatement*—Repeat your ideas if repetition gives them strength
7. *Anecdotes*—Use pertinent stories which help simplify meanings

In short, you are more likely to interest your audience if you compare, contrast, cite cases, quote testimony, make figures clear, arouse curiosity, and use visual aids.

#### TECHNIQUES OF SPEAKING

One teacher was sure that he knew his subject so well that his speech before the parent-teachers group required no preparation. After it was over, he had the deflated feeling that follows a rambling and incoherent talk. The impromptu or spur-of-the-moment method just did not click!

Shortly after this incident, he accepted another speaking engagement. This time he carefully wrote out the speech—

pointing out the importance of his subject—and *read* it to the audience. Again, he sensed that somehow he had failed to make contact. The listeners concluded that if the matter under consideration was so vital, it could have been remembered by the speaker (possibly with the use of notes) without his reading it.

*Memorizing* a prepared speech was the third method this speaker tried. This resulted in a stilted, inflexible presentation and accomplished little more than the other methods.

There remained the experiment of using the *extemporaneous* talk. As many speakers have discovered, this proved to be the most satisfactory. In the extemporaneous method, a sequence of ideas is carefully planned and outlined in advance. There is careful preparation, but the wording is never specifically committed to memory. The speaker, with the outline in mind or by the use of brief notes, chooses his words as he goes along. There is, however, clear and connected thinking because the main points are planned. The resulting talk usually is vigorous and seemingly spontaneous. A flexibility of expression is possible, and the ideas seem to grow and unfold right before the audience.

#### FOR THE "DIE-HARDS"

The "die-hards" who must tie themselves to the prepared written speech, because they lack confidence or have difficulty in thinking on their feet, must compensate for this failing by an effective delivery. Suggestions contained in the next three paragraphs may help these persons.

Take special care that the tone of voice does not become a deadly monotone. Cultivate a variety in expression by appropriate emphasis and inflection.

Choose and mark off parts of the speech that require special emphasis. Deal with explanatory statements in a

commenting tone. Each word, however, must be distinct, clear, and properly enunciated without artificiality. It may also help to mark off special breathing places.

Make frequent eye connections with the audience by absorbing a phrase, a clause, a line, or a sentence long enough to remember it while looking directly at the listeners. Stand far enough away from the lectern to avoid elevating the head when you want to look at the audience. Move the manuscript upward instead of the head downward when approaching the middle or the bottom of the page.

Persons wedded to the impromptu method can improve their delivery. Try to predict the kind of situation to be met. Have something tangible to begin with, such as an anecdote, a timely or related experience, the quality or value of the idea under consideration, or the main point.

#### WHEN TO SPEAK

An excellent opportunity for public relations presents itself at certain meetings or in discussion groups. Many times merely knowing *when* to talk helps. Discussions usually are held either to exchange ideas or to reach agreements. What is said, therefore, takes equal billing with knowing when to say it.

Monroe suggests the following eight reminders:<sup>6</sup>

1. Do not speak beside the point. If you have nothing to say directly bearing on the point at issue, keep quiet.
2. Speak of course, when asked a direct question.
3. Speak when you have an intelligent comment or suggestion to make.
4. Speak when you can make clear an idea another has badly muddled.
5. Speak when you can correct an error

<sup>6</sup>Op cit.

6. Speak when you can offer added information upon the question.
7. Speak when you can ask an intelligent question.
8. Speak when you can inject humor into an otherwise dry discussion.

Special devices follow which may prove helpful in securing agreement:

1. Pull your proposal from another by discussion.
2. Ask the opinion of another person who agrees with you.
3. Compromise on small points to secure agreement on big ones.
4. Eliminate, in so far as possible, doubtful points from your proposal.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of controversial problems and be prepared to make suggestions about resolving these problems.
6. Learn to disagree tactfully and courteously if disagreement appears unavoidable.
7. Avoid high-pressure methods; they usually inhibit cooperative thinking.
8. Shun emotional outbursts; they destroy respect and confidence.

Teachers often flounder around in giving short oral reports when a definite requirement calls for clarity, accuracy, and brevity. It may help to begin (in much the same way as the news story) by stating in one short sentence just what the report is about. Then, develop the report in logical order. Be sure to emphasize at the end facts or conclusions of particular importance, together with any recommended action.

**THE DELIVERY**

With practice, speaking skill can be developed. Almost anyone can improve his physical bearing and tone of voice. Attention to pitch, quality, volume, stress, pause, and prolongation gives to most persons a voice that carries and pleases.

The initial impression a speaker makes on his audience often is a decisive one. Before he says a word, many listeners hastily estimate his sincerity by the way he walks forward, by the way he stands, and by the way he looks. Practice and experience help the speaker to achieve good posture, adequate movement, effective gestures, and a pleasing voice.

A brisk, purposeful walk to the speaking platform inspires confidence and signifies energy and definiteness. There are no set rules to tell a speaker how to stand. Two good general hints are: lean slightly toward the audience and look at it, or give one person your attention for a moment and then shift to another person. Such attention makes a person feel that the speaker is talking to him personally. Do not overdo this attention business.

A good speaker does not stand like a wooden Indian, nailed to one spot. In addition to eye contact and facial expression he employs movement and gesture. Proper use of these techniques reinforces the speech and commands attention. Take a step to the side when changing from one idea to another. Step forward when a vital point is about to be delivered. Take a step backward when the occasion calls for a relaxing second or two. Be at ease and under control at all times.

Gestures are as much a part of language as the spoken or written word. Certain signs are unmistakably clear. Make use of them in emphasizing important points. For example,

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

the clenched fist indicates strong feeling; the hand on an imaginary shoulder suggests caution; a downward movement of the hands shows rejection; moving the hands from side to side with palms vertical indicates a division between two things. There are many other gestures, such as pointing or motions of giving and receiving that can add to the effectiveness of a speech.

It may be well to note the gestures that should be avoided. These include continually twisting the body; glancing toward the ceiling, floor, or wall, twisting or tapping the feet; swaying from side to side; rubbing parts of the body; collar snatching; shifting the body weight; and the Buddha stance (hands clasped across the stomach).

### SUMMARY

The very purpose of speech—securing understanding or moving listeners to action—marks it as an indispensable instrument in public relations.

Every teacher with a sound program should have convictions which clamor for vocal expression.

A speech is partly what is said, but it also includes how it is said.

Success in speaking depends on knowledge, self-confidence, and skill.

Self-confidence for the teacher should become a part of his working equipment.

Recommended steps in action-getting speeches are (1) to communicate, (2) to illustrate, (3) to motivate, and (4) to activate.

Attention can be aroused with something that challenges or shocks the listeners or with something that matters to them.

## **SPEAKING FOR UNDERSTANDING**

Sincerity, strong belief, and enthusiasm bring the talk closer to listeners, especially if the speaker translates the ideas into terms of audience experiences and desires.

The subject content of any talk must be information which interests the group, deals with a specific topic, but relates that topic to the entire area of education.

People are interested in themselves, and anything said to them in the form of a speech must be personalized.

A talk is almost worthless if it does not secure a clear understanding of the ideas presented.

The extemporaneous method, in which a sequence of ideas is planned and outlined in advance, usually results in a vigorous and seemingly spontaneous address.

Impromptu and memorizing techniques make an effective delivery difficult.

Discussions usually are held either to exchange ideas or to reach agreements; therefore, what is said assumes equal importance with knowing when to say it.

With proper practice, speaking skill can be developed, anyone can improve his physical bearing and tone of voice.

Movements and gestures are as much a part of communication as the spoken or written word, proper use of movements and gestures enforce the speech.

### **QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. List and analyze the traits of the most experienced speakers known to you.
2. Explain how you can understand a person better by listening to him speak or by reading his letters.
3. What characteristics do you rank highest in a speaker?
4. How does the delivery of a speech of conviction differ from the delivery of a persuasive speech?

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5. Which is more important, in terms of long-range values, appeal to emotion or appeal to logic and reason?
6. Is radio speech more accurate in communicating the speaker's thought and emotion than the public-platform speech?
7. Invite a successful public speaker to discuss with the class the techniques he uses most effectively. Follow the same procedure with a successful radio commentator, a television celebrity.
8. How does classroom teaching help a teacher in public speaking?
9. Have each member of the class prepare a ten-minute address on a specific topic for a given audience. Have several class members present their speeches, followed by a group discussion to evaluate the presentations.

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In radio, your word, your clause, your sentence, your paragraph must be clear at once, or it is lost. There is no second time, no opportunity, as in the printed word, to read it over again.<sup>1</sup>

## *Radio and Television*

TWELVE

Never before in the history of civilization have the opportunities for better public relations been so great. Two relatively recent and exciting media—radio and television—with their mass appeal have made this possible. Most authorities readily agree that these two means of communication represent the greatest technical advances in public relations since the invention of the printing press.

It is unfortunate that educators fail to make full use of these media to interpret the basic objectives of the schools to the public and thus add thousands of adults to the student body. More difficult to understand are the unwarranted attacks sometimes leveled against these two communications forms by schools because of alleged objectionable trends in programs.

<sup>1</sup> Luther Weaver, *The Technique of Radio Writing* (Copyright, 1948, by Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York), p. 2. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

**A TWO-HEADED INSTRUMENT**

Many teachers openly criticize television as a "pernicious influence on our youth." "It is something," they add, "that enables the people in one room to watch the nonsense going on in another room."

They should recognize that television cannot be dismissed with the same type of clever quip that failed years ago against radio. Instead of belittling or ignoring television, teachers should put this vivid, flexible audio-visual aid to work animating ideas and vitalizing class lessons.

There is wide variation in thinking, however, about the ability of parents and teachers to control the child's excessive interest in television and the use of this medium as a sound educational instrument. Some persons hold to the belief that television stimulates children's thought and imagination and widens their interest, others vehemently disagree. According to one teacher, youngsters invariably do not select programs of educational value but choose the "action-packed, gory and thrill-laden presentations."

On the other hand, directors of audio-visual instruction in several leading universities place the onus of making the maximum beneficial use of television squarely on the schools, the teachers, and the curriculum planners.

Television, with its assured audience of millions of people, like the radio and newspapers is here to stay. Primarily, it is a medium for entertainment, although it affords many opportunities for knocking down some of the traditional barriers of instruction.

The use of radio and television as aids in teaching is sound planning, but it is not enough. In addition, these means of mass appeal present limitless possibilities for sell-

ing the values of education to millions by the indirect approach of calling attention to what the schools are doing.

Again it may be wise to follow the lead of "big business" as expressed by the public-relations and advertising director of a large manufacturing company who once said, "Our purpose is to dramatize the 'extra step' which the [name of company] and its workers take in trying to make things better." With each extra step, education finds itself in an enviable position when it comes to telling the story of what is being done.

It is encouraging to report that countless school systems are getting excellent results in reaching the public through radio time. Baltimore, in particular, has been telling its story over station WFBR with such programs as Community Leader, the story of the part played in the community by School No. 126, Spare the Rod, a dramatization of classroom procedures, A Little While Ago, It Seems, a program in which a student of today asks a graduate of fifty years ago about the high-school girls of the Gay Nineties.

#### TIME FOR THE ASKING

The fact that television makes it possible for so many people to see as well as hear has special importance for subjects such as citizenship, industrial arts, fine arts, home economics, and music. This visual medium enables the audience to see as well as hear what is being done in the preparation of leaders for tomorrow.

Television, like radio, extends a welcoming hand to ideas and materials with educational value. Serious and interesting programs always are in demand, because there exists a continuing hunger for knowledge. Even if this were not entirely true, there still remains the Federal edict that a

certain number of public-service programs shall be presented by commercial stations.

**TYPES OF PROGRAMS**

Much of the same general pattern of school programs utilized by radio is adaptable for television. Radio has discovered that many school activities which seem routine have significant appeal and provide excellent material for mass distribution. There is a natural interest in school affairs. Popular types of programs include:

1. The newscast.
2. A spot broadcast of special events.
3. Discussion programs—interviews and classrooms of the air.
4. Quiz programs.
5. Speech programs.
6. Dramatic programs.

**THE NEWSCAST**

In newscasting, preference is given to local events. Like the newspapers, items should be submitted in readily usable form. News editors seldom have time to rewrite items and, as a result, many worthwhile local news stories are ignored because they cannot compete in style with reports flowing in over the service wires.

The same materials that interest the reading public usually interest the listening or viewing audience. Practically all newspaper stories can be rewritten for radio use. In radio, there are no headlines; thus the opening sentence is vital and requires a basically different approach from that of the newspaper story. The opening sentence in radio cannot be overloaded because it takes the listener a few

seconds to adjust his thinking. The listening mind cannot retain the number of facts usually included in a newspaper lead sentence.

Previous chapters have emphasized that radio news must have a clear, familiar, and conversational style. This means simplicity, directness, and brevity. This means short, crisp, direct, easy-to-say words and easy-to-say sentences. Short pieces—humor or oddities—always are in demand as fillers on the newscast.

#### SPOT BROADCAST OF SPECIAL EVENTS

Sports events, holiday programs, exhibitions, demonstrations, and recreational activities represent a few of the possibilities for use as broadcast or video features. The announcer can be aided immeasurably by the assistance and guidance of school authorities. The reward will be a more honest presentation of the event, including its objectives and significance.

There is the initial step of making contact with stations to cover these events. Do not wait for the station to approach the school in this matter. Presentation of the event means more to the school and to the teacher than it does to any other group. Written background material stressing objectives and a historical summary should be prepared, along with the names and addresses of participants. Any unusual sidelights help to create interest.

Intelligent "spotters" should be assigned to point out and explain what is happening. Assistance should be furnished to move heavy equipment or to protect vantage points from interference. When things go smoothly on spot broadcasts, the chances are increased for more frequent coverage of school events.

### DISCUSSION PROGRAMS

The most popular type of program in the broad area of discussion is the "classroom of the air." Here the public listens to various school programs in action. These have tremendous interest for parents and friends of the participating youngsters and for any persons curious about changes in educational methods.

The interview also is a familiar and popular presentation, especially when the questions asked produce answers which the public seeks. Three methods of planning are used in interviews: (1) a complete script of prepared questions and prepared answers, (2) prepared questions only, and (3) no advance preparation.

Keeping in mind that the more natural the interview the more effective and interesting it will be, one might conclude that the prepared-script method would result in a stilted and stiff performance. This often happens. There is the danger, however, in the "no-advance-preparation" method that the program will bog down completely. Lulls and inane questions may ruin the effect of an interview.

The prepared-question technique usually achieves the best results. Interviewers are alerted to the type of questions to be asked and are given time to formulate mentally accurate and coherent answers. Spontaneity and naturalness are by no means sacrificed by a few minutes of such preparation.

The classroom offers many opportunities for interviews, such as, a citizenship project on issues of an impending election, a home-economics unit on household decoration, a science lesson on electronics in the home, an agriculture project on the care of gardens, or a health-education unit on building strong and healthy bodies.

**QUIZ PROGRAMS**

All forms of quiz programs attract attention because people have a natural thirst for knowledge. As they listen, they get a thrill out of answering first and showing their superiority. They are proud of the youngsters who participate. As a result, there is a great demand for programs of this type. One excellent program of this kind was planned and executed by the schools in Travis County, Texas. Here a series of 30 radio broadcasts were designed to interest the young and old alike in improving the health of the people and the environment in which they live.

The programs were directed toward elementary-school children and the general public. Those in charge recognized that most school broadcasts tend toward the dry and dull side or toward the theatrical side. One is jam-packed with education but uninteresting; the other is highly entertaining but of limited educational value.

After the Travis County experiment, several groups evaluated the results. A high official of the local broadcasting company said, in effect, "I am delighted with the evidence noted among students and parents. The presentation of 'Healthful Living in Our County' demonstrates that public-interest programs are not 'audience-killers' and that radio time, intelligently used by schools motivates educational work and stimulates public support." Many parents said that they considered the health program and the increased attention given to health as improvements in the schools. A teacher made this noteworthy comment: "We can't do much unless we have the homes back of us. Because these programs are heard in the homes, we have interested people in our community. These interested people help us. We know it takes interested people to help us." One teacher

asked permission to teach health the entire year, instead of half a year, because she found so much subject matter in need of adequate coverage. A child's reaction was, "Health always has been one of my dreaded subjects but this year the radio program has made me interested in it."

#### SPEECH PROGRAMS

Unless the subject of a talk is of keen interest, or unless people are interested in the speaker as a personality, radio-speech programs usually are boring. The question-and-answer, the interview, or the round-table technique are of much greater interest.

Often, however, opportunities for short speeches present themselves, and these should not be ignored. With rare exceptions any talk of more than five minutes on the air is too long. Maintaining interest is difficult when all impressions received must come from the voice.

A good speech before a visible audience usually is a good speech over the air, provided that it is simple, animated, lively, concise, and properly structured. All the rules that help in maintaining interest in any speech apply to the radio speech.

Listeners prefer to be *talked with* rather than *talked to*. Speak in a natural voice and vary the delivery by changing the rate of speech and the tone of pitch. By all means avoid a monotonous effect. Maintain the human touch without undue attention to word articulation. The penalty for being excessively conscious of pronunciation is a talk that sounds studied, measured, and artificial.

#### DRAMATIC PROGRAMS

The central theme in dramatic programs is life itself. Thus, radio presentation of dramatic features merely por-

trays in dialogue form an interesting story from life. The basic requirements are conflict, unity, coherence, progression, climax, proportion, and naturalness.

Many learning experiences lend themselves to dramatization. A simple formula is a likable central character who arouses pity and compassion as he faces a conflict. He emerges from the conflict and thereby delights or saddens the listeners. The character must be sharply defined, and the action must move rapidly to the climax. As Flesch aptly points out, "There's nothing on earth that cannot be told through a hero—or heroine—who's trying to solve a problem in spite of a series of obstacles. It's the classic formula; and it's the only one you can rely on to interest the average reader."<sup>2</sup>

The following techniques will be found helpful for radio dramatic programs: the use of background material by the announcer to set the stage, repetition of the names of characters (frequent identification is necessary in radio), a minimum of description and a maximum of action, movement of characters with sound effects and voices fading in and out, the selection of characters with contrasting voices.

In television the appeal is primarily to the eye and secondarily to the ear. Hence dialogue should be kept to a minimum without padding or irrelevant words. Everything must appear natural and sincere.

The radio dramatic script differs from the usual typewritten page in several respects. In the radio script a 2-inch margin. A series of dots are often used in the body of the of voices, announcers, and cues. Sound effects and music cues (capitalized and underscored) also are inserted in this margin. A series of dots are often used in the body of the script, instead of periods, to indicate pause.

<sup>2</sup> Rudolf Flesch, *The Art of Readable Writing*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1949, p. 68.

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The television script is divided vertically, with the music cues and camera shots inserted on the left and the spoken material appearing on the right.

### SCHOOL-OWNED RADIO STATION

The students of New Albany, Indiana, schools raised approximately \$3,500 to purchase a transmitter and studio equipment. It is believed that the 10-watt transmitter was the first low-power FM noncommercial educational station to be owned by a public-school system. WNAS was dedicated to the improvement of speech, instruction, and public relations.

Pupils operate the equipment and announce, write, and direct their own shows. WNAS is regarded as a teaching instrument, and each elementary classroom has its own radio. Many of the broadcasts are unrehearsed. The station programs have been heard as far as 30 miles away and have regular listeners up to 12 miles away; the population area approximates one-half million people. What a challenge this offers to communities throughout the nation!

A sample program at New Albany's WNAS follows:

**THURSDAY: FEB. 2, 16; MARCH 2, 16, 30; APRIL 13, 27; MAY 11, 25.**

#### INTENDED AUDIENCE

1:15	Music Box (Music appreciation)	Grades 2-6
1:30	Opportunity Unlimited (SHS) Clubs	Adults
1:45	Purdue School of the Air (History highlights)	Grades 5-8
2:00	Indiana School of the Sky (Books)	Grades 4-8 and adults
2:15	NAHS Sport Roundup	Adults
2:30	Public Health Series	Grades 6-12 and adults
2:45	Teen Time	Teen-agers at home

**THINGS TO COME**

An encouraging sign is the initiation of television programs for educational purposes. Several broadcasting companies have plans for major networks to provide daily education for children. These plans involve cooperation between the company, itself, the National Education Association, and boards of education in communities served by the respective telecasts. Programs doubtless will encompass a wide range of subjects, including geography, history, citizenship, health, science, literature, music, and numerous others.

New York State has gone beyond the planning stage by spending millions of dollars for the construction of an educational network designed to cover the entire state. The program should help to raise educational standards and facilitate uniformity of instruction among school districts. The possibilities of these "electronic blackboards" for public relations are enormous. Some day it may be as important for an educational system to have television as it now is to have schoolhouses.

Philadelphia reports several hundred television sets in elementary and secondary schools, with programs that reach over 200,000 students. Programs supplement classroom work, and include the history of world music, arts and crafts, science, and other programs dealing with the broad aspects of government.

**SUMMARY**

Radio and television afford two important communication outlets for public relations.

Radio and television can help sell the values of education to millions of people by calling attention to what the schools are doing.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

Radio and television authorities extend a welcoming hand to educators with ideas and materials of educational worth.

The most popular types of such programs are the newscast, the spot broadcast, the discussion program, the quiz program, the speech program, and the dramatic program.

The radio newscast must have a clear, familiar, and conversational style.

Spot broadcasts require the assistance of intelligent "spotters."

School programs in action are the core of the discussion program.

Three methods of planning interviews are (1) complete script of prepared question and prepared answers, (2) prepared questions only, and (3) no advance preparations.

The natural thirst of people for knowledge makes quiz programs highly popular.

In speech programs the important thing to remember is that listeners prefer to be talked *with* rather than talked *to*.

The dramatic program is a splendid vehicle for health stories and other learning situations in which suspense plays an important role.

The future of radio and television in education itself and as a technique of school public relations appears unusually bright if educators join with communal interests in furthering the use of these media.

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss specific ways in which radio and television may affect public relations in the years ahead with reference to education in schools and colleges.

2. To what extent are parents justified in criticizing television (and possibly radio) for restricting the optimum growth and development of children? How might education aid in this problem?

3. Invite an educational director of audio-visual instruction to meet with the class and discuss the proper uses of radio and television for educational purposes.
4. Organize a panel, consisting of representatives from audio-visual instruction, school administration, teachers, parents, children, and radio or telecast companies, to discuss the values and limitations of television and radio for use in education.
5. Make a list of school activities best suited for use in each of the following media: a newscast, a spot broadcast of special events, discussion programs, quiz programs, speech programs, and dramatic programs.
6. Select the school most familiar to you and prepare a radio or television script for one of the activities listed in answer to the above question. If possible, obtain the services of a professional from a nearby station to evaluate your efforts.
7. Consult your state education department on plans it has for the use of radio and television (*a*) in education and (*b*) in public relations. What constructive suggestions might you offer to assist the department?

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To give a less distorted view of physical education purposes and activities, the good teacher will build windows through which physical education can be observed with greater clarity. One of these windows is the physical education demonstration.<sup>1</sup>

## *Demonstrations and Exhibitions*

THIRTEEN

The above quotation, directed especially at physical education, applies in equal measure to most subjects in the curriculum. Custom or tradition in education seems to leave demonstrations and exhibitions to the so-called special subjects, like physical education, music, industrial arts, household arts, and others. Perhaps educators might profit by changing this custom and by using demonstrations and exhibitions as the windows through which the public observes with greater clarity the important things that go on in the schools.

Fortunately, most people are interested in their children and in their schools. It is unusual to find parents who, if given the opportunity, do not try to understand the purposes and programs of instruction. What better way can education guide public opinion than to present a part of the actual activity program in the form of a demonstration? This can

<sup>1</sup> Miriam Gray, *Physical Education Demonstration*, A. S. Barnes and Company New York, copyright, 1947

be done not merely once a year but at regular intervals, not for a select audience of parents but for everyone in the community who can be induced to attend.

Through demonstrations an awareness of the over-all educational objectives can be aroused. These results can be accomplished, however, only if the display is truly a *demonstration* in every sense of the word.

#### GOOD AND BAD

Some demonstrations rightfully show education as it really is—the regular program carried on in schools or parts of it, dressed up slightly to emphasize important features. Too often, however, any resemblance to the actual teaching situation is purely incidental.

Selected by chance is the following high-light activity used to describe an annual physical-education demonstration:

. . . the boys spelled WELCOME with red and green lights and then followed the leader into a large circle that wound into the center. At the proper moment, the leader changed direction and unwound the circle. The variety of colored lights moving in so many different directions made a thrilling sight.

Quite unjustifiable were the numerous class-instruction periods devoted to preparations for the spectacle described above, especially when it was billed as a demonstration. Further, the public gained an impression of physical education very different from the opinion desired by teachers in this particular school. The public gets enough distorted views about education without the help of well-meaning but ill-advised exhibitionists.

Demonstrations planned primarily for *entertainment* are

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responsible for many attendant evils. Too much time and effort are required for preparation. The students who are the best performers are selected, thus causing disappointments and feelings of inferiority among those less skilled. In such demonstrations one may expect personality clashes among students, accompanied by nervous tensions, superiority complexes, and emotional strain; and on teachers the pressure is terrific.

Under these conditions the cost of perfection in performance is too high a price to pay in terms of energy spent and educational values received. Results are measured by the finished product instead of in terms of student growth. Practice makes perfect, and class periods become routine rehearsals for weeks and months preceding the event. There is only a slight connection between the demonstration and the actual program; thus the public gets a distorted view of daily or seasonal activities. And for what? Certainly not for sound public relations.

This is the same type of faulty thinking that blames the overemphasis on sports instead of the poor teaching and the lax administration of sports. The teacher who throws up his hands and says, "What's the use? What can I do? That's what the people want to see," deserves only passing mention. It is later than he thinks. The best type of demonstration or exhibition shows the school in action—the way the school operates from day to day to enrich the lives of students and persons living in the community.

Hundreds of people can profitably view a real demonstration with limited frills. And the special preparations detract little from the operation of the regular program. Such a demonstration emphasizes the everyday activities taught throughout the school year. On the other hand, a demonstration that approximates a glorified vaudeville show or ex-

hibition bears only slight resemblance to actual learning experiences normally provided by the school.

It should be obvious that the school and the teachers are the determining factors in the type of interpretative program offered. Large audiences and enthusiastic interest should be welcomed, but in no way should the attendance size dictate the type of activities presented in the demonstration.

The best demonstrations and exhibitions charge no admission fee. Nominal admission charges can be used to pay operating costs, or to raise funds for needed equipment. Another excellent expenditure of part of the receipts is for filming the event (by a professional photographer) and for making the prints available for community gatherings. Throughout the years a library of such films can depict historical progress of the instruction program and contain reminiscent appeal similar to the school yearbook. In any event, the public should know exactly what use the school intends to make of funds raised by charging admission to school events.

#### DIRECTING PUBLIC OPINION

In many communities deep-rooted problems have to be faced. A well-conceived demonstration may compare unfavorably in interest value with an exhibition extravaganza staged by a previous teacher. To establish the value of the right kind of production may become a long and discouraging effort.

Blaming the public will not solve this problem. Development of mutual understanding between school and community represents a long and tedious process; under effective leadership such understanding flows in both directions. For example, a sports-minded town will not be converted

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overnight into one highly appreciative of the modern dance or of music festivals. Changing the appreciative level of people is a difficult task, but often the venture yields rich returns.

A more difficult problem arises when the principal or superintendent demands the glorified type of exhibition. The final answer here is to do it his way. But do not call it a *demonstration*. Let it be known that the show is given for entertainment value. In the meantime, strive for the opportunity to present a demonstration that has real and substantial value in terms of education.

### **INCLUDE SEVERAL EDUCATIONAL AREAS**

The best demonstrations or exhibitions contain elements from all parts of the school program and try to give a picture of the class, shop, or laboratory in operation. Ideally, the best demonstration of a school to parents or others can be secured by having all interested persons visit the school in operation. But since most people are employed during the day, to operate the complete school at night for demonstration purposes poses many problems.

Some elementary schools have found it feasible to have fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade pupils report for an hour on a parents' night and carry on their regular school activities. Junior and senior high schools also have used variations of this method in order to show parents the work of the school. At times a group of five or six pupils from each class may demonstrate the work of the group in the classroom. In other plans, two-, three-, or four-subject fields are selected for demonstration purposes each night until the entire program of the school has been covered. In establishing a series of demonstration nights, it is well to include both academic and nonacademic subjects in the program for each

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night. Not only is interest served by such planning, but a better idea of the balance of the program is conveyed to parents and others.

Often productions are built around a general theme, with subordinate features of educational worth. A brief list of topics follows:

In Grandpa's Day	Spring Festival
Time Marches On	Robin Hood
Dance of the Ages	Roman Festival
We Are Americans	The Spirit of Progress
See the World	History of Sports
Easter Parade	Indian Ceremonial

In Baldwin, New York, this type of event has developed over a period of years into an annual Girls' Week with programs similar to the one shown below:

SUNDAY- Go-to church Sunday

MONDAY -Assembly for high school girls and mothers. A mother daughter tea

TUESDAY -Father's night Program and reception

WEDNESDAY -Entertainment program for mothers and daughters

THURSDAY -Mother-and-daughter Banquet and entertainment program

FRIDAY -Tea dance

SATURDAY-The culmination. A sports night with a blue and gold team engaging in all types of physical education activities

Appropriate was this motivating theme used by the Baldwin schools and borrowed from George Herbert "At the game's end we shall see who gains."

The girls' week outlined above was originated by the women's director of physical education. Although it features exhibitions rather than demonstrations, it serves as an excellent medium of public relations.

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A sample of the hundreds of letters of thanks sent in to the school follows:

Dear Miss \_\_\_\_:

Congratulations on a beautiful week of activities for the girls. As a mother, I appreciate the memories my child will always retain of Girls' Week.

Sincerely,

In addition to entertainment, exhibitions also create interest in physical-education activities. An outstanding example of this is the annual ice carnival sponsored by the Lake Placid, New York, high school.

The King Winter Frolic at Lake Placid has assumed the mantle of a junior Olympic inter-sports meet, with such activities as skiing, hockey, speed and figure skating, and ski jumping. A splendid job of educating high-school youths in competitive winter sports is the reward of its sponsors.

Physical education by no means monopolizes the activities at Lake Placid. Various subjects of the school are integrated as follows:

*Art*—Making posters and decorations for the Icicle Hop

*Home Economics*—Planning and serving refreshments and making the carnival flags

*Shop*—Constructing props

*Music*—Playing for ceremonies

*Business education*—Typing correspondence, schedules, score sheets, and booklets

*English*—Writing letters, newspaper releases, and thank-you notes

*Student Council*—Acting as guides

*Parent-Teacher Association*—Donating free rooms

## **TYPES OF DEMONSTRATIONS**

*Good demonstrations do not suffer by comparison with exhibitions. Although the primary purpose is to show some of the activities that comprise a diversified and modern educational program, this does not mean condoning a crude production. High standards of achievement can be upheld even though the process—the actual doing—is the important thing. Excellence of performance represents a desirable objective in both instructional classes and demonstrations.*

Physical education is superbly equipped to demonstrate its activities with vital, moving interest and with spectator appeal. Musical and physical activities appeal to children and adults. Present also are the elements of conflict, the appeal of the unusual, and a wide range of activity. The natural approach to an activity often holds more public interest than a polished and superficial performance.

An illustration of this occurred in a demonstration conducted in a large city. Between an excellent though artificial act entitled 'Exercises with a Purpose' and a smartly conceived dance routine was a fill in volleyball demonstration. The volleyball participants were elementary-school youngsters, and their zeal far exceeded their skills in the activity. These lads brought down the house with their display—not because of perfection but because like all human beings, they made mistakes. The overflow crowd accepted their offering with enthusiasm—mistakes and all.

Other subjects lend themselves admirably to the type of demonstration described above. Some of these subjects include science, home and family living, the preparation and value of foods, industrial arts, and the creative arts.

Demonstrations should portray actual events in the instructional program. In this way the general public learns to

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gain an understanding of, and a belief in, the worth of a given program. Such demonstrations present an opportunity to explain why each activity contains educational value. Demonstrations represent a direct and effective interpretative medium.

At Wells High School in Chicago, frequent demonstrations are presented outside the classrooms. Programs such as "Chemistry in the Home," "Chemistry as a Tool of War," and "Dyes in Everyday Life" have been used by the science department to portray the work of the student outside of the laboratory.

Unsolicited comments from the audience which summarize the value of pupil demonstration are gratifying: "Since seeing the demonstration, I plan to take chemistry next semester"; "The program gave me a good idea of the work my boy is doing in science", and "I never really understood the meaning of spontaneous combustion until I saw it demonstrated."

An educator, speaking as a father and taxpayer, once commented about as follows

Many parents and taxpayers worry about the education their children receive. Children don't behave as they should, they don't learn very much. A man who owns a local store says the high school graduates he employs can't add, a newspaper publisher says they can't write; most parents think they don't study hard enough. And then the board tells us that school taxes must be raised! Can you blame us for worrying? Are we getting our money's worth?

It is a natural thing and a healthy one for parents to worry about the education of their children. But this worry can be reduced by showing parents what the schools are

<sup>2</sup> Used by courtesy of the *Chicago Schools Journal*, p. 25. September-December, 1945

teaching. Such fears are not merely to be shrugged off as a natural thing; they should be refuted by demonstrations of practical activities which may lead to observations similar to the following:<sup>3</sup>

Whenever I hear that our children are going to the dogs, I am reminded of two statements that appeared in an editorial column a couple of years ago. One declared: "The children . . . have bad manners and contempt for authority, they show disrespect for their elders." The other read: "Our earth is degenerate in these latter days . . . Children no longer obey their parents." The first opinion was delivered by Socrates, the second by an Egyptian priest thousands of years before Christ.

#### SEEING IS BELIEVING

The fundamental areas of instruction in any school can be dramatized for public consumption by demonstrations and exhibitions. One excellent example is the "School at Work," wherein parents and other interested citizens observe students taking part in regular classroom work. Some schools arrange these events in the evening to ensure a large audience. At such times either teachers or pupils explain the major objectives and procedures of each school area, ending the demonstration with activities of greater dramatic appeal. Herein lies a grand opportunity to show what vital materials go into the instructional program, to explain how classes are taught to develop skills, to demonstrate new methods of control and the need for competent leadership.

There it is before the eyes—activities contributing to the health, happiness, efficiency, and development of young-

<sup>3</sup> Walter Biddle Saul, "I'll Stick Up for the Schools," *Saturday Evening Post*, Apr. 15, 1950.

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sters. Do not try to compress a year's work into an hour-and-a-half program, but rather show a variety of selected activities. Most subjects merely need showing and explaining to sell themselves solidly to the public.

Above all else, the demonstration should present an accurate picture of what is being taught. It should not include only activities that show well but which have little or nothing to do with the daily program.

### PUBLICIZE THE DEMONSTRATION

A demonstration affords opportunities for interpretative publicity stories and explanatory letters to parents. The Mishawaka, Illinois Dance Production gets wide coverage each year because somebody works at it. Everyone in the community knows the program will include an introduction of modern and interpretative dance, combined with ballet, toe, waltz, acrobatic, tap routines, and other types blended into a unique performance which portrays skill, beauty, and self-expression.

The Great Neck, Long Island dance group presents its annual recital after a special matinee performance for the benefit of elementary-school students. The program is the usual one with varied sequences of dance dramatization, but the publicity efforts for this recital represents a top professional job.

### SUMMARY

Portions of the actual program should be presented at regular intervals for everyone in the community to see.

Demonstrations planned primarily for entertainment should be called exhibitions so that the public does not get a distorted reflection of a given program.

Exhibitions can be responsible for such evils as inferiority

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and superiority complexes, misuse of class time for practice, and attendant nervous tensions

The school and its teachers are the determining factors in the type of program offered.

Because of deep-rooted interests, changing the appreciative level of people may prove difficult

Exhibitions can be interesting and instructive when planned and presented intelligently.

If actual parts of the school program are presented, the ability of the general public to understand and believe in the values of the program is broadened considerably

The demonstration affords opportunity for interpretative publicity stories and explanatory letters to parents

### QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is there a possibility that the community will demand bigger and better demonstrations each year so that daily programs of instruction are endangered? What is the solution to this problem?

2 Some teachers contend that charging admission to demonstrations excludes many people in the community. Should everyone be permitted to view school presentations? Explain

3 Should the demonstration be televised or broadcast? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

4 If seating facilities are limited, should the presentation be repeated? Should there be two performances on the same night, one in the afternoon and one in the evening? one each on successive nights? Discuss the advantages of each plan

5 How can such accusations as the following be answered "The (name of subject or grade) teacher is at it again trying to show off his program with an exhibition"?

6. If admissions are charged, who should handle the receipts? Who should decide what is to be done with the money?

7 Is it a better plan to have separate demonstrations for girls and boys? for elementary and high school groups?

## DEMONSTRATIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

8. Should teachers be paid overtime for exhibitions and demonstrations? Explain your point of view.
9. What are the advantages or disadvantages of an outdoor demonstration or exhibition?
10. Should athletic contests be regarded as exhibitions or demonstrations? If so, should the same educational policies apply as for other demonstrations?

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**When the public relations program of a school system rests on a foundation of sound classroom accomplishment, it is like the house built upon a rock. Storms of ill founded criticism and innuendo will not overwhelm it. Its foundations are sure.<sup>1</sup>**

## *Evaluation—and a Look Ahead*

**FOURTEEN**

The explorations and explanations in these pages of how public relations makes possible an increasingly effective program of education in the community have touched on many focal points. Quite obviously many teachers, administrators, and school-board members are not aware of the necessity for, and the constructive aspects of, sensible public relations. With the pressure of increasing demands on school personnel, there is an understandable reluctance to assume the new duties inherent in gaining community understanding and good will for the schools. Many teachers and administrators feel uncertain and insecure in using the basic techniques of publicity, often confusing publicity with showing off. *But honest evaluation and reporting of school-work are as necessary to intelligent progress as the employment of competent teachers and principals.*

The teacher who enjoys effective and friendly relations

<sup>1</sup> American Association of School Administrators, *Public Relations for America's Schools*, Twenty-eighth Yearbook, National Education Association, Washington, 1950, p. 51.

with pupils and parents is the ambassador of public relations in a basic and encouraging way. There are, without question, many teachers who have influenced hordes of pupils and several communities through the effectiveness of their classroom efforts. To encourage such teachers, to coordinate the efforts of all teachers, administrators, pupils, and others in the development of understanding and support of the schools is the challenge inherent in public relations. Keep in mind that bad public relations in education thrives on the mistakes or overt acts of school people who, for one reason or another, create wrong impressions in their dealings with one or more of the various publics.

**APPRAISAL PRECEDES ACTION**

Any community profits from an appraisal of its school-community relationships. The fact that parents and taxpayers seem to approve of school programs and policies should furnish no false sense of security. Only by accurate and consistent determination can school personnel know the degrees of approval or disapproval registered by community members toward the public schools. Use of opinion questionnaires, as suggested in Chapter 2, together with other appraisals, can point the way for understanding and progress. Valuable check points appear in the sections that follow.

**STATED OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

Consistency of action and improvement of educational opportunities demand that school programs be understood by the community. Reasonably, the aims of the schools' policies and procedures, in terms of the child and the stated program, must detail the areas of growth and development of primary concern to teachers, administrators, parents,

and others. Where specific statements of school policies, practices, and expected outcomes result from the co-operative efforts of professional personnel, parents, and pupils, a splendid basis of understanding for effective public relations has been built. *In any event, an acceptance of the basic objectives of a school or school system by the professional personnel must precede attempts to create better understanding and support of the schools by the public.*

An artful teacher, now retired, once reported that the most helpful method of teaching was to assume that young people did not know and to carry this assumption through to the point where he was sure that they had learned. So too in a program of public relations, it is far wiser to continue to assume that various publics do not understand what the schools expect to accomplish until educational personnel are certain that the publics do understand.

#### PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

Throughout this book, emphasis has been placed upon the fact that the key to the interpretation of school tests is in the hands of teaching and administrative personnel. Further stress has also been placed upon the need for accepting the obligation each teacher and administrator assumes in working with pupils, parents, and others to gain greater understanding.

Each teacher, principal, superintendent, or supervisor can secure a first appraisal of the effectiveness of public relations by noting the frequency with which pupils carry into their home guided reports of the work of the school. All pupils report on the daily work of the schools, for better or worse. Securing the cooperation of teachers in helping pupils plan the reports which go to the homes provides

## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

many opportunities for successful initiation of a wide range of reporting techniques.

Consideration of the work of the school in each classroom offers the additional advantage of securing pupils' opinions and reactions. The attitudes of pupils toward educational programs and toward personnel are not only of significant importance for present purposes but they are the basis on which the future understanding and support of public schools must rest.

Caution has been voiced in these pages concerning attempts to secure pupil support by either personal popularity or by delegating to pupils choices of content or procedures beyond the limits of immature judgment. *Above all else, professional competence among teachers, supervisors, and administrators is the watchword in building desirable pupil and public reactions in support of their schools.*

### PROGRAM EMPHASES

Just as the manufacturer is certain of the worth of his product, so too the schools must work from the certain belief that the programs of each school are designed to offer maximum educational opportunities to children and youth in each community.

No brief has been made for the doctrine of change for the sake of change. Attempts have been made in the preceding pages, however, to document the need for frequent and critical appraisals of school offerings in each community. It has been said that the best school system is one that meets the needs of the greatest number of pupils in its constituency. Such factors as the number of pupils that finish high school, adjustment of educational offerings in accordance with pupils' plans, needs, and economic pos-

sibilities for further preparation—these are pressing in program evaluation and planned program change.

#### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Somewhere in the process of program evaluation and interpretation must come a translation of the program into dollar costs. The expectancy of the community that additional educational opportunities for more pupils can be accomplished without an increase in cost is as erroneous as the flippant adage that two can live as cheaply as one!

The reasonably alert administrator has determined to some degree the ability and willingness of the community to support education, at least in terms of the existing program of education.

Accuracy and validity of budget requests, sources of funds per pupil, must of necessity be stressed in effective public relations. *Local and state financial support for schools depends not only upon existing mind sets of community members but over a period of time upon the degree of public understanding developed for improving programs of education.* The number of communities which have documented the necessity of understanding as a prerequisite to support is legion.

#### **LEADERSHIP IN GAINING PUBLIC SUPPORT**

It has often been said that who leads is not so important as the fact that someone leads. Granted that leadership in improving public relations should be recognized and utilized, no matter what its origin, yet the significant aspect of leadership lies in a willingness and competence to initiate and secure greater public understanding and support.

*The importance of the classroom teacher as the focal*

*point in any public-relations program has been stressed in many sections of preceding chapters. The administration, however, must first assess itself on the degree to which it assumes the obligation to initiate desirable public-relations techniques.*

In essence, the impetus for starting a school- or city-wide program of publicizing the work of the schools comes generally from a superintendent, principal, or board-of-education member. Once underway, the public-relations program can well utilize the leadership abilities of teachers, members of the community, and others.

#### A LOOK AHEAD

Interest without understanding, whether in public schools or government, can lead only to chaos and retrogression. The welfare of children is at stake always when programs and policies of the public schools are in the process of control or determination.

Traditions of this country and our constitutional provisions which safeguard basic beliefs give to states and municipalities the immediate control of public education. Certainly, no one would deny the desirability and the necessity of retaining the bases of local relationships in public education; only from the concept of regarding schools as possessions of the public does society fulfill the true responsibility of public education.

It is unreasonable to assume that all members of a constituency understand the objectives of schools to the same degree. It is also unreasonable to assume that most members of communities have either the desire or the capacity to acquaint themselves with those aspects of school-program and policy determination which are commonly regarded as requiring professional competence.

Future plans must start from basic considerations which are realistic; plans which accept as fact the desire of some groups to gain control of the schools to some degree, often for selfish ends. Realistic plans call to mind that the history of this country represents a story of wise decisions made on the basis of complete information and understanding and of certain unwise or tragic decisions made when complete information and understanding were not secured. Faith in the ability of Americans to make wise decisions in the light of complete information and understanding (whether on local, state, or national levels) is the bulwark upon which public education builds for the future.

Each person in public education carries the obligation to improve understanding among pupils, teachers, administrators, parents, and other community members. *The daily application of any plan of public relations which helps others to understand and support an improved program of education is in essence an effort to retain and improve democratic society.*

**QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Which techniques of securing opinions of parents and pupils would be most adaptable in your community?
2. List the types of programs in your community's schools which are not clearly understood. List the procedures which stimulate the most questions from parents and pupils.
3. What steps might be taken to secure better understanding of the program types and procedures listed in the above question?
4. Draw up a tentative statement of objectives for a school which might be proposed at a public meeting. Plan the personnel who should take part in securing the adoption of the stated objectives and procedures.
5. What techniques of translating the school budget in your community into per-pupil costs would be most feasible? What

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN EDUCATION**

publicity media should be used to acquaint people with per-pupil costs for instruction? for general control? for supplies? for maintenance? for books?

6. What publicity techniques would be most adaptable in presenting the sources of funds which support public education in your community? Select the pictorial forms which might be used to stress the per-capita contribution each citizen makes to public education.

7. Outline a tentative plan to utilize the professional competences of the school staff while bringing the community into educational planning in your community.

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## *Preseason Athletic Questionnaire*

## **Appendix A**

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS BUREAU**

1.

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE INITIAL	NICKNAME
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2 College address

Class of

Phone

3 Home address

Phone

4 Home town paper

5 Physical

a Sex      b Age  
c Married or single

c Height

d Weight

e Children

6 Education

High school or prep  
Other

7 Service record

a Branch  
c Rank  
e Outfit or ship  
g Athletics

b Time  
d Awards  
f Combat theater (s)  
h Remarks

8 Sports skills

9 Other skills

SIGNATURE



## *List of Syndicates, Networks, and Services*

## **Appendix B**

### **PAPER FEATURE SYNDICATES**

Allied News Service—9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N.Y.  
Associated Press Features—50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N.Y.  
Central Press Association—1435 E. 12th St., Cleveland, Ohio  
Consolidated News Features—247 W. 43d St., New York 18, N.Y.  
Herald Tribune News Service—230 W. 41st St., New York 17, N.Y.  
King Features Syndicate—235 E. 45th St., New York 17, N.Y.  
N.E.A. Service—1200 W. Third St., Cleveland, Ohio  
North American Newspaper Alliance—247 W. 43d St., New York 18, N.Y.  
Religious News Service—381 Fourth Ave., New York, N.Y.  
Science Service—1719 N. St., N.W., Washington, D.C.  
United Features Syndicate—220 E. 42d St., New York 17, N.Y.  
Western Newspaper Union—210 S. Desplaines St., Chicago 12, Ill.

### **RADIO NETWORKS**

American Broadcasting Company—30 Rockefeller Plaza New York 20, N.Y.  
Columbia Broadcasting System—485 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y.  
Mutual Broadcasting System—1440 Broadway, New York, N.Y.  
National Broadcasting Company—30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N.Y.

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### **NEWSPAPER WIRE SERVICES**

Associated Press—50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N Y  
Chicago Tribune Press Service—Tribune Tower, Chicago 11, Ill  
International News Service—235 E 45th St , New York 17, N Y  
United Press—220 E 42d St., New York 17, N.Y.

### **PHOTOGRAPHIC SYNDICATES**

Acme Newspictures—461 Eighth Ave , New York, N Y  
Associated Press News Photo Service—50 Rockefeller Plaza, New York  
20, N Y  
International News Photo—235 E 45th St New York 17, N Y  
N E A Service—1200 W Third St , Cleveland, Ohio  
United Features Syndicate—220 E 42d St , New York 17 N Y  
Washington Post News Service—Washington Post Building Washing  
ton, D C  
Western Newspaper Union—210 S Desplaines St Chicago 12 Ill

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